



Jordan Times

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Likud, Labour said closer

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli cabinet minister Moshe Katzav, negotiating to form a new government, said Monday his rightist Likud Party could reach coalition agreement with the Labour Party within two days. He said teams representing Israel's two largest parties had drawn closer on most issues during nearly seven hours of highly-publicised secret talks. "There was progress. A few questions remain open," Katzav told reporters. "We are carrying out intensive talks and want to finish as soon as possible. I hope that in a day or two we will finish the talks." The talks have yet to resolve whether to return the foreign minister's job to Labour Party leader Shimon Peres or assign him the finance portfolio. Aides say Peres would prefer the foreign ministry. But Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and some members of Peres's own party favour his taking the treasury. Shamir accuses Peres of undermining their outgoing cabinet by pressing for an international Middle East peace conference. Labour members are pressing Peres to take over the finance ministry to help troubled Labour-affiliated industries and indebted collective settlements.

Iraq sets date for election

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq announced plans Monday for its first general election since a ceasefire ended fighting in the eight-year war with Iran. A decree issued by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the top legislative body, set March 1 as the election date, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. The decree said every Iraqi over the age of 25 was eligible to stand for the 250-seat National Assembly and candidates should put their names forward from Jan. 2. The election, originally scheduled for August, was postponed after Iran said it would accept the U.N.-sponsored ceasefire which took effect Aug. 20. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced Nov. 27 that new political parties would be allowed and, with the exception of "Iranian spies," all people convicted or wanted for political offences would be pardoned. A commission supervising the poll said members of the armed forces and security services should resign their posts if they wanted to stand for election. The assembly, which will have a four-year term, debates draft laws and, if ratified, passes them to the RCC, headed by the president, for final approval.

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AROUND THE WORLD...

Oman recognises Palestinian state

MUSCAT (AP) — The Sultanate of Oman Monday upgraded an earlier statement of support for the Palestinian independent state into full recognition, the Foreign Ministry announced. The announcement came after an emissary from Yasser Arafat delivered a message Sunday from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman to Sultan Qaboos. The visit by PLO envoy Hayel Abdul Hamid was the first by a ranking PLO member to the Sultanate.

Talks on bases in Greece start today

ATHENS (R) — Greece and the United States will start final talks Tuesday on the future of U.S. military bases in the country, the U.S. embassy said Monday. The 12th scheduled round of negotiations at the Foreign Ministry was due to open Monday but was delayed for "procedural reasons," an embassy spokeswoman said. At stake are four large bases and 20 smaller U.S. installations in Greece which operate under a 1963 agreement expiring this month.

Turkish-Cypriot soldier dies after shooting

NICOSIA (R) — A Turkish-Cypriot soldier died Monday a day after being shot by a Greek-Cypriot guard in the U.N.-controlled buffer zone dividing Cyprus. The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in an Ankara statement released before the U.N. reported the soldier's death, described the shooting as "the latest in a series of recent attacks on the boundaries of the Turkish republic of north Cyprus and on the buffer zone." Hassan Kara, a 20-year-old conscript from Famagusta, was shot near Nicosia's Ledra Palace hotel, now a U.N. headquarters on the green line. North Cyprus police said he was on routine patrol when Greek Cypriot guards fired at him. The Cyprus national guard said the soldier was shot when he entered the buffer zone and refused challenges to halt as he approached a Greek-Cypriot observation post.

Amnesty charges Iran with killings

LONDON (R) — Iranian authorities have carried out the biggest wave of secret political executions since the early 1980s, Amnesty International said Tuesday. The London-based international human rights organisation said it had indisputable evidence of mass killings, coming from relatives of executed prisoners and statements by authorities. It said it had received information on more than 300 people executed since July but that the true total could run into thousands. "Nobody really knows how many people have been put to death — just as nobody knows when the killing will stop, or who will be next to die," Amnesty said.

Syria urges Arab unity against Israel

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria called Monday for Arab unity on military action against Israel and rejected what it termed manoeuvres and concessions. "Our enemy, which acquires a destructive force and has aggressive intentions, cannot be faced with manoeuvres and concessions," Prime Minister Mahmoud Za'bi told a rally to mark the first anniversary of the Palestinian uprising. "The enemy's arsenal and his aggressive strategies can only be confronted with force which can be achieved through Arab unity," he told his audience at Damascus University.

U.S. denies Rumsfeld charges

FRANKFURT (AP) — The U.S. air force Monday strongly denied newspaper reports that U.S. soldiers used force to keep local residents and a news reporter away from the scene of the crash of an air force attack jet. The fiery crash of an A-10 Thunderbolt II jet into a residential neighbourhood in Rumsfeld Thursday killed six people, including the U.S. pilot. The accident renewed a public outcry against military flights over residential areas and triggered allegations by some West German officials that U.S. authorities mishandled the rescue efforts and delayed releasing information. A statement issued by the U.S. air force's European headquarters in Ramstein denied a newspaper report that U.S. soldiers sent to the area used force.

2 Britons held in Hess case

WEST BERLIN (R) — Police have arrested two Britons accused of trying to sell goods that belonged to Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess, West Berlin's Justice Department said Monday. Police detained the men in a Hamburg hotel Saturday as they arrived to collect money for the belongings, which they had offered to Hess's son for 500,000 marks (\$286,000), a department spokesman said. The men, 33 and 23, are now in investigative custody in West Berlin on suspicion of attempted extortion. They were not named. One of them was a guard at Spandau prison in West Berlin, where Hess spent the last 21 years of his life as the sole inmate.

Fahd donates Palestine embassy

AMMAN (J.T.) — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has donated a furnished building in Riyadh's diplomatic district to serve as the embassy of the newly-proclaimed State of Palestine, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative in Riyadh was quoted as saying. Rafiq Nabha, a member of the Fatah movement of the PLO, told the Saudi Press Agency that the PLO had received an amount of \$14.25 million as an instalment of Saudi aid to the PLO in implementation of the 1978 Baghdad summit resolutions.

Egypt: Israel cannot occupy land for ever

CAIRO (R) — Israel must learn that it can live together with the Palestinians, Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Meguid said Monday. The year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip showed that "Israeli occupation cannot remain for ever," he told reporters before leaving for the special U.N. General Assembly session in Geneva.

Walesa: Poland should hasten reforms

PARIS (AP) — Solidarity leader Lech Walesa said Monday his outlawed trade union was ready for roundtable talks on reform of the Polish system, and strikes should be a last resort. Speaking at a news conference a few hours before returning to Poland, the Nobel Peace Prize winner thanked President Francois Mitterrand for inviting him to attend ceremonies Saturday marking the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was the first time Polish authorities had allowed Walesa to travel abroad since martial law was imposed in 1981.

Rebels warn Sri Lankan newspapers

COLOMBO (AP) — Anti-government militants Monday ordered newspapers not to print anything about next week's presidential election, said a spokesman for the four major publishing companies. The warning was made in leaflets written in Sinhalese and delivered to the publishing companies by the People's Liberation Front, an extremist Sinhalese group that has called for a boycott of the Dec. 19 balloting, said the spokesman. The front contends the government is incapable of conducting a fair election. The government-owned Lake House group and the three independent groups — the Independent Newspapers, the Upali group and Express newspapers — have vowed to defy the warning, the spokesman said.



Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor are received upon arrival at Orly airport Monday by French Culture Minister Jack Lang and senior officials (Petra wirephoto)

Mounted Israeli police charge Arab schoolgirls

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli police chasing stone-throwing Palestinian schoolgirls entered the sacred Haram Al Sharif complex in Arab Jerusalem Monday and fired tear gas at the demonstrators, witnesses said. Four demonstrators were arrested, police officials said. In the occupied Gaza Strip, merchants shut their stores for a second straight day to mourn the deaths of two residents killed by army gunfire Saturday.

In the occupied West Bank, troops raided the village of Salem near Nablus and ordered residents to paint over nationalist slogans. Villagers stoned soldiers who opened fire, wounding a 22-year-old, hospital officials said. Eyewitnesses said about 50 teenage girls marched in Arab Jerusalem's main street after police closed their school inside the Haram Al Sharif, site of Al Aqsa Mosque, and led them out of the walled Old City. Policemen on horseback charged the group as the girls shouted "Allahu Akbar," the witnesses said. "The police did not say anything to get them to disperse. They just went into them, beating

Firebomb injures 6

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Six people, including an American woman, were injured Monday when an assailant hurled a firebomb at an Israeli bus in Arab Jerusalem, causing it to slam into a wall and a parked car, police said. Police searched for the assailant and closed off Saladin Street, Arab Jerusalem's main commercial thoroughfare where the crash occurred.

after the Higher Islamic Council denounced the Israeli army's interference in Muslim affairs during the year-old Palestinian uprising.

The statement listed eight complaints, including prevention of West Bank worshippers from entering Jerusalem for Friday prayers, attacks on mosques, confiscation of loudspeakers used to call the faithful to prayer and arrests of Muslim clerics.

It specifically mentioned Sheikh Mohammad Al Kafrawi, an Al Aqsa prayer leader facing criminal charges of "incitement."

Another relief plane crashes; 7 killed

Hopes fade for finding more under Armenian rubbles

YEREVAN (Agencies) — Hope dwindled Monday for finding more survivors in the wreckage of last week's Armenian earthquake, which officials estimate killed up to 60,000 people. For the second straight day, a plane carrying relief supplies to the region crashed. All seven people aboard the Yugoslav transport died.

Despite calls for unity to cope with the devastation that left an estimated half-million people homeless, more ethnic violence was reported in the region. Armenian activists said protesters clashed with troops Sunday over the arrest of several nationalist leaders, and that both soldiers and demonstrators were wounded. They said the violence occurred in Yerevan, the Armenian capital.

President Mikhail Gorbachev accused "provocateurs" of exploiting the disorder to create instability in the ethnically troubled republic and said: "They must be stopped." A dozen tanks were parked in Yerevan's central square Sunday night. Gorbachev, after touring the area, promised residents of the disaster zone that the government would begin an investigation of why newly constructed apartment buildings crumbled so easily while older buildings remained standing after Wednesday's quake.

On Sunday, a Soviet military transport plane carrying soldiers to aid to rescue efforts crashed as it approached the airport of Leninakan, a city hit hard by the quake. Seventy-eight people died. A Yugoslav military plane crashed Monday while trying to land at the Yerevan airport. First

Deputy Aviation Minister Boris Panyukov told a Moscow news conference that all seven people aboard were killed. Local reporters said the pilot mistook a well-lit highway for a runway.

The plane was part of a widespread international relief effort. George Reed, a spokesman for the Geneva-based Red Cross, said the only people still alive in the wreckage would be those fortunate enough to have found some water and a supply of fresh air.

Gorbachev and international rescue workers warned of the danger of epidemics breaking out. But one relief official from the United Nations, Sverre Kilde, told the AP the danger was substantially reduced by sub-freezing temperatures in most of the region, which would inhibit the growth of disease-carrying organisms.

Peace, economic cooperation high on GCC summit agenda

BAHRAIN (R) — The foreign ministers of six Gulf Arab states worked on an agenda Monday for a Gulf summit expected to focus on accelerating economic cooperation and helping Iran and Iraq make peace.

Ministers of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) discussed the agenda during two days of talks ending Monday. Conference sources said the major emphasis was on economic growth and cooperation. GCC heads of state meet in Bahrain to discuss economic, military and political coordination next Monday, their first summit since a ceasefire went into effect between Iran and Iraq Aug. 20.

It will be the ninth annual summit of the Gulf leaders, whose states have 40 per cent of the world's oil reserves. The Bahrain-based Gulf News Agency reported that GCC oil ministers were also to start talks in Bahrain Monday. Diplomats said the Gulf states wanted to implement an ambitious joint development plan following the end of eight years of the Gulf war.

A conference source said economic cooperation had grown slower than hoped and the eight-year-old GCC group now wanted joint projects to accelerate economic growth, harmed by a sharp drop in oil prices and the heavy drop of large arms purchases. He said a proposal to open a dialogue between the GCC and Iran was presented at the foreign

King begins 3-day visit to France

PARIS (Agencies) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Monday began an official visit to France during where the King is expected to seek renewed European efforts for peace in the Middle East in light of the latest developments in the Palestinian scene.

The King and Queen were received upon arrival by French Culture Minister Jack Lang with an official welcome ceremony with full military honours.

During the three-day visit, King Hussein is expected to discuss the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) recent change of strategy and prospects for an international peace conference on the Middle East.

King Hussein has praised the PLO for helping further peace in the region by accepting a two-state solution, renouncing terrorism and endorsing United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. He is scheduled to meet President Francois Mitterrand, Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas Tuesday and hold talks Wednesday with Prime Minister Michel Rocard before leaving Thursday.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King's discussions with Mitterrand and Prime Minister Rocard would deal with various world and regional issues. It said the visit "comes within the framework of continuous consultations with European Econo-

mic Community leaders on the Middle East problems and the Palestinian issue."

The trip follows talks in London last week with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, during which the King urged the British leader to support a speedy convening of an international peace conference.

The King's talks in Paris are also expected to touch on the situation in strife-torn Lebanon and in the Gulf in the light of the Iran-Iraq peace talks which began after a ceasefire halted eight years of hostilities Aug. 20.

Upon his departure for Paris, the King was seen off by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who was sworn in as regent, members of the Royal Family, senior officials and high-ranking army officers as well as the French charge d'affaires in Amman.

King Hussein is accompanied on the visit by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qassem.

Rifai said Sunday an economic cooperation accord between Jordan and France would be signed in Paris.

Regent briefed on education expansion

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday visited the Ministry of Education and was briefed on the ministry's expansion plans in implementation of resolutions taken by the first national educational conference of last year. Minister of Education Thougan Hindawi presented the briefing outlining the main projects on which work had already started. These, he said, include programmes for providing higher qualifications for teachers, a change in the school textbooks, new school buildings and a change of the curricula.

The Regent also heard a briefing on progress in talks between the Ministry of Education and the World Bank and the Japanese government for loans needed to carry out educational programmes.

Arafat delivers much-awaited U.N. address in Geneva today

GENEVA (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat addresses the U.N. General Assembly Tuesday with a question mark hanging over whether he will make further concessions to meet U.S. conditions for a Middle East conference.

The three-day meeting was moved to Geneva, the U.N.'s European headquarters, after Washington refused to grant an entry visa to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman.

The Palestinian National Council (PNC), at a meeting in Algiers last month proclaimed an independent Palestinian state and implicitly recognised Israel's right to exist by accepting U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for a peace conference. It also renounced terrorism.

The PLO went further in Stockholm last week, saying it "accepted the existence of Israel as a state in the region."

Most countries regarded the PLO concessions as sufficient but

Israel rejected the statements outright as little more than propaganda.

Washington still views PLO statements as ambiguous. "Straightforward, unambiguous acceptance (of Israel) is essential," one U.S. official told Reuters.

"To satisfy the U.S. the PLO must say directly it recognises Israel's right to exist within secure and recognised borders, not just that it recognises its existence."

Arafat's political adviser, Bassam Abu Sharif, indicated that the PLO leader might do just that in his U.N. address, although the PLO's foreign affairs spokesman, Farouk Kaddoum, appeared to rule out fresh concessions in an earlier interview with a Tunisian newspaper.

Abu Sharif told the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth in an interview published Monday that Arafat would recognise Israel within its pre-1967 borders.

He said the PLO wanted a state

Forged currency seized, 27 suspects arrested

AMMAN (Petra) — Police have seized counterfeit currency in American dollar, Turkish lira and Saudi riyal in 15 cases over the past two and half months, and arrested a total of 27 people in connection with the cases, police said Monday.



Colonel Ghaleb Zoubi, director of the Public Security Department's division in charge of anti-forgery operations and combatting drug trafficking, said the seized currency (see photo) included 40,000 American dollars, 10,000 Turkish liras and 500 Saudi riyals. Zoubi said 15 of the suspects were Jordanian and the others were nationals of neighbouring Arab states.

Zoubi said the department had handled an increasing number on an unprecedented level of counterfeit cases over the past few months. He attributed the phenomenon to the recent increase in the value of the American dollar against the Jordanian dinar and the rush to buy dollars by moneychangers and commercial banks in the Kingdom.

Most of the seized currency notes were smuggled into Jordan from neighbouring countries and they found their way to citizens and moneychangers in view of the demand for foreign currency, Zoubi said.

According to the officer, Jordan is free of currency forgers, and the PSD is intensifying efforts to stem entry of counterfeit currency into the Kingdom. He said large amounts of counterfeit currency were found in neighbouring countries, and warned that there would be increased efforts to smuggle them into Jordan in the coming months.

Warning the public to be alert against counterfeit currency, Zoubi also urged citizens report all major transactions involving American dollars and conduct dealings only through licensed banks and moneychangers in the country.

He said the Jordanian dinar was impossible to forge as was proved from previous instances which were discovered immediately.

Aoun reopens crossing

Belgian teacher shot dead in Beirut

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Unidentified gunmen in a car shot dead a 65-year-old Belgian teacher walking to work in west Beirut Monday, police and witnesses said.

They said about four gunmen in a Volvo car shot Arthur van Nieuwerburgh in Jirdaq street near the Saudi Arabian embassy as he was walking from his home to work at 10 a.m. (0800 GMT). Police said he was hit in the head with five bullets from guns equipped with silencers. The car fled the scene.

They said they had no information on possible motives for the shooting but said the attackers were apparently professional killers who had watched his movements for some time.

Nieuwerburgh had received no death threats, friends said. Residents said the white-haired Belgian, who taught English at the British Council Centre, run by the Makdessi Institution, and at the Rashideen Language

School, walked the same route to work at the same hour each day. Residents threw a brown blanket over the body, which lay in a pool of blood in pouring rain for four hours as cars and school buses passed by. The body was finally taken by ambulance to the American University Hospital.

The area is controlled by Syrian troops who moved into west Beirut in February 1987 to end three years of militia lawlessness and chaos. A handful of Lebanese policemen later inspected the scene. It was the first killing of a foreigner in west Beirut since the Syrian deployment and the first in the capital since gunmen shot a French intelligence officer in east Beirut in February.

Only a few foreigners remained

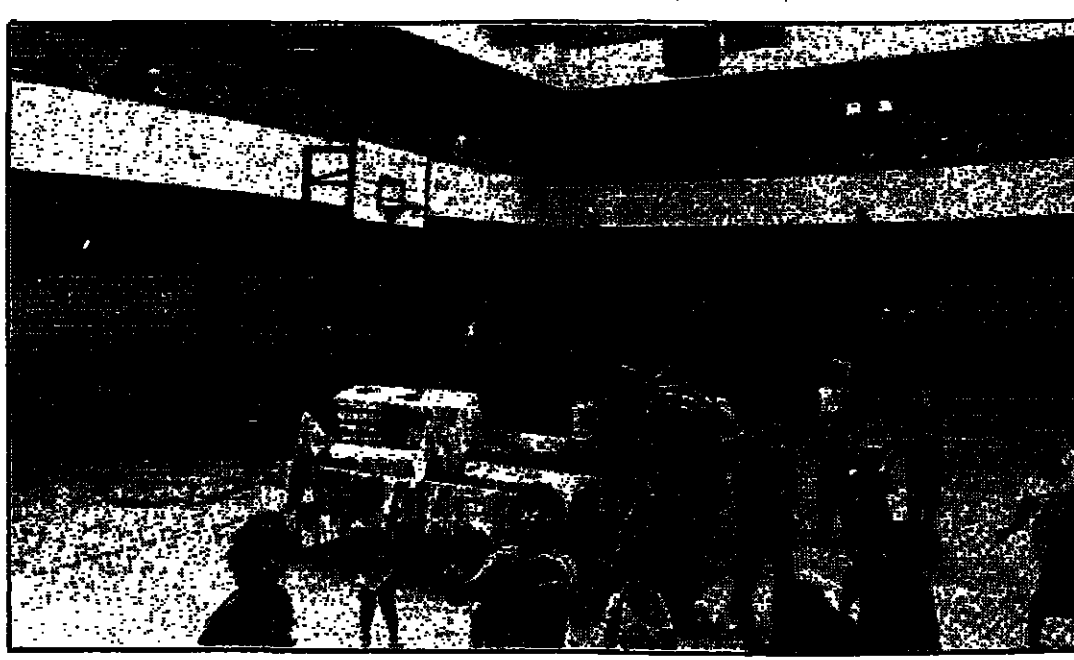
in west Beirut after a wave of kidnappings and killings in 1986 prompted the bulk of the Western community either to quit Lebanon or move to the eastern sector.

Officials at the Belgian embassy in Beirut said the dead man had lived in Lebanon since 1971 and spoke some Arabic.

Army commander Michel Aoun reopened the only gateway between Beirut's eastern and western sectors to car traffic Monday and promised to lift an 11-day food blockade of west Beirut, police said.

Aoun, who heads the military cabinet in Lebanon's dual government, ordered the closure of the gateway Dec. 2. The shutdown has caused acute bread and gas shortages in west Beirut.

Sources close to him said at the time the move was a reaction to the central bank's failure in west Beirut to pay the November salaries of army personnel in east Beirut.



West Bank schools are abuzz again with children after a 10-month closure by the Israeli occupation

authorities. But the closure may have dealt an irreversible blow to Palestinian education.

Prolonged school closures extract heavy toll from W.Bank education

By Mary Sedor
The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, Occupied West Bank — Palestinian educators say they face a difficult task trying to motivate children deprived of education during the Israeli occupation authorities' prolonged closure of West Bank schools. They also fear the education system may never fully recover.

After a nearly 10-month shutdown, elementary schools are again abuzz with children's chatter. Junior high schools reopened Sunday, and high schools are to resume next week, bringing all 300,000 West Bank students back to classes.

But the West Bank's 1,194 schools may never achieve the same standard since they were closed, with the exception of a few weeks, last Feb. 3, educators warn.

"In the limited period we have to catch up for nearly a year of lost education, I'm sure our standards will decline," said Khalil Mahshi, principal of the Quaker-run Friend's Boys' School in Ramallah. "The quality of education we could provide before the closure has definitely been lost."

Army officials say schools were closed because they became breeding grounds for protests during the year-long Palestinian uprising. West Bank universities and colleges are being kept shut indefinitely.

Shaikhe Erez, head of the West Bank "military administration," warned other schools would stay open only if they were "used for learning and not for demonstrations."

According to Palestinian educators, the schools face myriad difficulties, ranging from a decline in enrollment because of the prolonged closure to devising ways to motivate students who have lost the discipline of regular study.

"Our number one problem is getting the children into the habit of coming to school regularly again," said Abdullah Rishmawi, principal of Ramallah's Lutheran School.

"For almost a full year, these children have been in the habit of watching TV until late at night and getting up at 9 or 10 in the morning. Now we are asking them to get back into the swing of school discipline. It is not going to be easy."

Even though last year's academic term never ended students were automatically promoted — often, educators fear, at the expense of basic skills.

"They have moved on to the next grade, but this really means nothing," Mahshi said. "In terms of learning, these students have lost a year. How will this affect their learning in the long run? I'm particularly worried about that."

Especially at risk, he said, are children in the primary grades.

"There are critical periods in a child's life when he begins to learn skills like reading, writing and numbers," Mahshi said. "If you miss that period, although he may eventually learn to read, a person will never reach the same level of competency."

Palestinian attempts at alternative study during the school closure were quickly outlawed by the army, which contended they were organized to incite protests.

Last month, Mahshi and Rishmawi were called into Ramallah's military headquarters after they distributed home study assignments.

"We insisted that only parents pick up the packets and deliver the completed assignments so we would not be accused of gathering students," Mahshi said.

"But the army ordered it stopped. They said the school closures were to pressure parents into understanding what they were losing and home study counteracted this."

Psychological toll

The frequent clashes and mass arrests in the uprising also have taken a psychological toll on students that schools are ill equipped to deal with.

"Our first job every day is to play the clown and try to get the children to smile. They arrive frowning and sad, traumatised by some family encounter with the army. We have to get them to cheer up," Rishmawi said.

"But we just don't have the resources to deal with the more severe effects of stress — nightmares, bed wetting, depression," he said.

Enrollment in West Bank schools has dropped considerably as Arab-American students left for schools in the United States and hundreds of others enrolled in Jerusalem schools during the closures.

The student body at the Friends School, for example, is expected to be just 250 compared with 470 students last year. The school will graduate seven seniors instead of an expected 33.

Rebels claim downing Afghan transport plane

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Afghan rebels based in Pakistan Monday claimed responsibility for shooting down an Afghan transport plane in which Kabul authorities said 25 people were killed.

They said the plane was shot down with a U.S.-supplied Stinger missile near the eastern Afghan town of Khost in Pakia province bordering Pakistan.

They said they had no information about casualties. The rebel statement contradicted an official Kabul Radio report Sunday which said the plane was attacked by Pakistan air force jets intruding into Afghan air space.

The radio said the plane, flying from Khost to Kabul, crashed killing 25 people including three children and a woman.

A Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by the official APP news agency, dismissed the radio report as "totally baseless and mischievous."

Last month Kabul said Pakistani jets shot down a transport plane whose pilot had lost his way and strayed over Pakistan, killing all 30 people on board.

Pakistan said the aircraft was an intruder.

Fahd meets Rabbani

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia held talks with Afghan rebel leader Burhanuddin Rabbani in Riyadh late Sunday, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

It said Saudi Information Minister Ali Hassan Al Shaer attended the meeting, but gave no other details.

Rabbani, who leads a seven-party rebel alliance, headed a team of Saudi-backed Mujahadeen earlier this month at the first high-level contacts between the rebels and Soviet officials.

The two sides agreed at the Saudi resort of Taif to meet again in Pakistan. After the talks ended Dec. 6, Rabbani visited the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina.

Dumas: Peace possible in wake of PNC moves

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak had talks Monday with Foreign Minister Roland Dumas of France, who said they discussed the Palestinian problem and other Middle East issues.

In a Cairo newspaper interview published Monday, Dumas said recent policy decisions by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) made a peaceful Arab-Israeli settlement possible. He urged Israel to respond with an initiative of its own.

Dumas arrived from Iraq Sunday night for a two-day visit in Cairo.

After the meeting with Mubarak, the French diplomat told reporters: "We always speak as friends with Egyptian officials. My meeting with President Mubarak has deepened this feeling. We discussed Palestinian developments, the Lebanese crisis and other problems in the (Middle East) region."

Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid, who attended the meeting, conferred with Dumas separately afterwards.

In an interview with the state-owned newspaper Al Akhbar, conducted in Paris before he left for Iraq, Dumas praised last month's decisions by the Palestine National Council (PNC).

"The decisions by the Palestine National Council make a peaceful settlement possible," Dumas told the newspaper.

He urged Israel to "accept reality — the reality of the Palestinian people with whom it lives side by side."

"These people have hopes and rights, particularly their right to self-determination, like every other people. ... This could mean a state."

"The hope of peace is reemerging, and it must be seized. I appreciate the difficulty of an initiative, but we expect one from Israel. Only at this price can a dialogue start eventually on the basis of mutual (Palestinian-Israeli) recognition."

He said there currently is no plan for PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to visit Paris. "There is no problem over the principle of a visit, but it should be useful if it is to take place," Dumas said.

Dumas told a news conference before leaving Baghdad for Cairo that France was ready for an international peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"France believes that the Middle East peace conference is the key to the settlement of all issues in the area and it is ready to attend it," he said. "The outcome of the PNC in Algiers has paved the way for such a conference."

He also said that France would press its partners in the European Economic Community to assist in an international effort for the resumption of the deadlocked Iran-Iraq peace talks.

Sudanese peace talks postponed

ADDIS ABABA (R) — The Sudanese embassy in Ethiopia said Monday that planned peace talks between the government in Khartoum and rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Addis Ababa had been postponed.

The official Sudanese news agency reported Sunday that Defence Minister Abdul Maged Hamed Khalil and Foreign Minister Hussein Abu Saleh were to fly to Addis Ababa Monday for talks with the SPLA on implementing a ceasefire and convening a constitutional conference.

But a Sudanese embassy spokesman told Reuters: "They are not coming. Their arrival is postponed until further notice."

He did not elaborate. Last month, the SPLA signed an agreement in Addis Ababa with leaders of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the second largest party in Sudan's ruling coalition, on how to end the country's five-year-old civil war.

This tentative peace agreement called for a ceasefire and the convening of a constitutional conference to decide on a new framework for government by Dec. 31.

It also called on the government to lift a three-year-old state of emergency, freeze its plans to implement Islamic law and repeal its military pacts with other states — an apparent reference to defence ties with Egypt and Libya.

The DUP-SPLA peace agreement, which was signed Nov. 16, was negotiated with the blessing of Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi.

However, it has not yet been formally endorsed by the Sudanese government and parliament and until their approval is given no ceasefire will be declared.

This is the second time follow-up talks to the Nov. 16 agreement have been unexpectedly postponed.

Earlier this month, diplomats in Khartoum reported that Abu Saleh would hold talks with the rebels in Addis Ababa Dec. 5, but he failed to show up.

The SPLA has been fighting a bush war in southern Sudan since 1983 to end what it sees as the domination of the south by the north.

Forged visas — a booming trade in Lebanon

By Diana Abdallah
Reuters

BEIRUT — Next to a roaring trade in bullets and bombs almost the only business booming in Lebanon these days is the sale of forged visas to people who want to leave.

Around 400,000 Lebanese want to quit their homeland which has been racked by sporadic war for 13 years and now has no president, two governments, two armies, a toothless parliament and rival militias vying for power.

For a price, forged entrance visas can be supplied to gain entrance to the United States, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, West Germany — the list is endless.

Some travel agents specialise in supplying forged visas at \$2,000 each.

The business has flourished over the past three months as up to one-in-eight of the population, according to official sources, are planning to emigrate from a country facing a threat of partition.

Those buying the forged papers don't always escape the

security net.

Security officials at Beirut airport told Reuters they had arrested 300 people with forged visas — mainly to Canada, Sweden, Germany, Poland and Denmark — in the past three months.

"Some admit they bought the visas, while others were fooled by some travel agents," one official said.

He quoted one man, recently arrested for selling forged visas, as saying hundreds of people had asked him for travel documents after failing to get entry permits from several countries.

Western embassies are cautious about granting visas to Lebanese, who need entry permits to all countries except Syria.

The measures started about five years ago after a wave of bombings in Europe and the kidnapping and killing of foreigners by pro-Iranian militants in Beirut.

Long waiting queues of university graduates, students and families form at embassies in Beirut and in Damascus, where they

sometimes keep nightlong vigils and wait for days for their turn to apply for visas.

For some the uncertain and often protracted delay in getting an official response is too much to take.

"My brother wanted to go to Canada, but after waiting for over a year to get a visa he became desperate and decided to buy a visa from one of those travel agents," said one Lebanese.

"Now my brother is in Canada," he added.

"We always hoped this war would end, but now we are stuck in small areas expecting the worst to happen any minute. We feel we are suffocating and have to leave," said Nicola Hajj.

The 30-year-old engineer was one of several university graduates engaged in a heated argument at a west Beirut restaurant about whether to leave Lebanon or not.

"I am applying to Canada and Australia. Whichever gives me a visa first will become my new country," he said.

At least five of his friends said they planned to leave.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Mauritania frees deposed leader

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Former Mauritania leader Mohammad Khouna Haidalla is to be freed from house arrest under an amnesty marking the fourth anniversary of the coup which ousted him. A presidential decree published Monday said five Haidalla's close military aides were also being released. All were arrested during the Dec. 12, 1984, bloodless coup by Colonel Mohammad Maouya Ould Sid'Ahmad Taya. None has ever been tried. Haidalla ruled Mauritania from 1979. The aides being freed were named as Lieutenant-Colonel Athie Hamath, navy Captain Diop Mastapha, Major Moulaye Hachem Ould Moulaye Ahmad, Captain Breika Ould Mbarek and Major Mohammad Lemine Ould Zein.

U.S. navy detonates mine in Gulf

BAHRAIN (R) — The U.S. navy blew up a mine found drifting in the central Gulf near Bahrain, shipping sources said Monday. Bahrain's coastguard spotted the mine Sunday, 25 miles northeast of the country's coast. It was the first to be detected in the central Gulf for several months. Kuwait last Tuesday said it had exploded a mine in the northern Gulf.

East German official visits Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — An East German cultural representative arrived in Israel Sunday, the first East German official to visit the Zionist state. Herman Falk, director-general of the state-run artists' agency, said he came to explore the possibility of East German artists performing in the annual Israel festival in the spring. Israel and East Germany have never had diplomatic relations. Three members of the East German Communist Party visited Israel last April at the invitation of Israeli Communist Party members but did not hold any official talks.

Sudan denies allowing force through to Chad

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan denied Sunday that it had willingly allowed a force from the Libyan-backed Islamic Legion to pass through its territory to infiltrate into Chad. A Foreign Ministry statement said such allegations by the Chadian government, which had questioned Khartoum's declared neutrality in the Chad-Libya conflict, harmed relations. The statement said the government had told N'djamena that an armed group fled into Chad after a clash in which the Sudanese army suffered five casualties.

Swiss Red Cross staffers leave Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Three Swiss Red Cross delegates left Lebanon over the weekend, bringing to 12 the number withdrawn since a Red Cross representative was kidnapped last month, police said Sunday. The police spokesman said Christophe Girod and an unidentified Red Cross colleague left for Geneva aboard a Middle East Airlines jet. The spokesman said another Swiss delegate, Dr. Gerard Bise, left Saturday, also for Geneva. About 19 delegates remain in the country.

Six killed in Turkish mine blast

ANKARA (R) — An underground explosion at a private coal mine in western Turkey killed six people and seriously injured four Monday, a mine official said. The blast was some 100 metres below ground at the Baris mine, 280 kilometres west of Ankara, which employs 600 people and produces about 500 tonnes of coal per day. Twenty-two miners were rescued uninjured from the six-year-old mine after the explosion, believed caused by a gas build-up, the official told Reuters.

Shipwreck reveals pottery treasures

TEL AVIV (R) — Archaeologists in a diving gear have retrieved treasures of clay pottery believed to date from the 5th century B.C. from a nearly-intact ancient shipwreck in shallow water off the coast Haifa. Elisha Linder, director of the university of Haifa's centre of maritime studies, said the finds were potentially "an important landmark for research of Phoenician seafaring and maritime trade of the central and eastern Mediterranean." Remains of the wooden vessel were exposed by a storm three years ago after lying covered by a thick layer of sand for more than 2,000 years, the university said in a statement.

Despair sinking in

"For many years of the war we accepted shelling, living in damp shelters for days, kidnappings, killings of loved ones, lack of power, water and even bread."

"Now our country faces division. It is better to leave than be forced to choose between two loyalties," said Said Madi, a 50-year-old businessman and father-of-three, preparing to emigrate to Canada with his family.

Scores of other families told Reuters they had plans to start a new life abroad, it what official sources said the worst wave of emigration since the start of the civil war.

Most of the Lebanese plan to go to Canada, the United States and Australia, but officials at the embassies told Reuters there has been no recent increase in the number of Lebanese applying for visas.

The \$2,000-a-time visa men appear to have cornered the market.

For Lebanese mass emigration is not a new phenomenon. Hundreds of thousands left in 1860 after bloody clashes between the country's Druze and Christian communities.

"We know once we leave we will face difficulties in adapting, but at least we will escape the ugliness of having to choose which part of Lebanon to live," Hajj said.

Thousands more left during World War I, swelling communities already established in Africa, Latin America and Europe.

A deep economic crisis that hit the country also prompted thousands to seek employment mostly in oil-rich Gulf states and many leading businessmen and bankers moved to more stable if not greener pastures.

Traders by instinct the Lebanese gained immense influence in the economic life of many of their host countries and some became leading politicians and businessmen.

Some of the Lebanese who emigrated over the past few years say they suffered from anti-Lebanese sentiment in Europe and the United States as Lebanon became associated with plane hijackings and kidnapping of Westerners.

"We know once we leave we will face difficulties in adapting, but at least we will escape the ugliness of having to choose which part of Lebanon to live," Hajj said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME ONE	15:30	15:50	16:00	16:30	16:45	16:50	17:00	17:10	17:20	17:30	17:40	17:50	18:00	18:10	18:20	18:30	18:40	18:50	19:00	19:10	19:20	19:30	19:40	19:50	20:00	20:10	20:20	20:30	20:40	20:50	21:00	21:10	21:20	21:30	21:40	21:50	22:00	22:10	22:20	22:30	22:40	22:50	23:00	23:10	23:20	23:30	23:40	23:50	24:00	24:10	24:20	24:30	24:40	24:50	25:00	25:10	25:20	25:30	25:40	25:50	26:00	26:10	26:20	26:30	26:40	26:50	27:00	27:10	27:20	27:30	27:40	27:50	28:00	28:10	28:20	28:30	28:40	28:50	29:00	29:10	29:20	29:30	29:40	29:50	30:00	30:10	30:20	30:30	30:40	30:50	31:00	31:10	31:20	31:30	31:40	31:50	32:00	32:10	32:20	32:30	32:40	32:50	33:00	33:10	33:20	33:30	33:40	33:50	34:00	34:10	34:20	34:30	34:40	34:50	35:00	35:10	35:20	35:30	35:40	35:50	36:00	36:10	36:20	36:30	36:40	36:50	37:00	37:10	37:20	37:30	37:40	37:50	38:00	38:10	38:20	38:30	38:40	38:50	39:00	39:10	39:20	39:30	39:40	39:50	40:00	40:10	40:20	40:30	40:40	40:50	41:00	41:10	41:20	41:30	41:40	41:50	42:00	42:10	42:20	42:30	42:40	42:50	43:00	43:10	43:20	43:30	43:40	43:50	44:00	44:10	44:20	44:30	44:40	44:50	45:00	45:10	45:20	45:30	45:40	45:50	46:00	46:10	46:20	46:30	46:40	46:50	47:00	47:10	47:20	47:30	47:40	47:50	48:00	48:10	48:20	48:30	48:40	48:50	49:00	49:10	49:20	49:30	49:40	49:50	50:00	50:10	50:20	50:30	50:40	50:50	51:00	51:10	51:20	51:30	51:40	51:50	52:00	52:10	52:20	52:30	52:40	52:50	53:00	53:10	53:20	53:30	53:40	53:50	54:00	54:10	54:20	54:30	54:40	54:50	55:00	55:10	55:20	55:30	55:40	55:50	56:00	56:10	56:20	56:30	56:40	56:50	57:00	57:10	57:20	57:30	57:40	57:50	58:00	58:10	58:20	58:30	58:40	58:50	59:00	59:10	59:20	59:30	59:40	59:50	60:00	60:10	60:20	60:30	60:40	60:50	61:00	61:10	61:20	61:30	61:40	61:50	62:00	62:10	62:20</
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NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

KING HONOURS CHILEAN ENVOY: His Majesty King Hussein has conferred on Chile's Ambassador to Jordan Carlos Derpsch Bartsch with the Jordanian Medal of Independence of the First Order in recognition of his efforts towards promoting Jordanian-Chilean relations. The medal was presented to the ambassador at a luncheon given in his honour by Minister of Labour Marwan Dudin. The medal was presented upon the completion of the ambassador's tour of duty in the Kingdom which began in 1985. (Petra)

ARAMCO DONATION TO W. BANK: The Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) has donated \$294,000 for 31 charitable societies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In a letter to Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, director-general of the Department of Palestinian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jamal Ahmad Al Sarayrah, ARAMCO's representative in Jordan, indicated that the amount was deposited in the respective accounts of the said societies at the Arab Bank. (J.T.)

SOCIETY ELECTS BOARD MEMBERS: The Jordanian Alumni Society for Graduates of Universities and Institutions in USA was recently established in order to promote cultural, social, and friendship ties between Jordanian and Americans in both the U.S. and Jordan. The society will also serve as the "mother society" for all Jordanian graduates from the U.S. to serve as a legal advisory body and a source of support for students. During its first meeting, the members of the society selected Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Al Qassem as the society's president, Dr. Rajal Mousher as vice president, Dr. Hashem Moghrabi as secretary general and Mr. Nasser Nasser as treasurer. (J.T.)

Police apprehend suspected murderer

AMMAN (Petra) — A man believed by the police to have close connections with the murder of an employee working for a petrol station in Amman has been apprehended for investigation, according to an official announcement by the Public Security Department (PSD) Monday.

The announcement neither released the name of the man, who was arrested Monday, nor the name of the victim who, it said, had worked for the same petrol station for 26 years.

The PSD announcement said the full details of the crime and the outcome of investigations with the suspect will be revealed to the public once they are completed.

The announcement was made by Brig. Ahmad Khasawneh, deputy director of Amman Police Department, who said the PSD was informed about the murder by one of the owners of a fuel tanker truck who had gone to fill his vehicle with fuel Sunday morning, and that the police were guided to the suspect by a call from another man whose name was not disclosed.

Khasawneh said the information given to the police about the suspect and the gathered information led to the apprehension of the man for interrogation.

The coroner's report said that the murder was committed after working hours Friday night, Khasawneh noted in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He said the motive of the murder was robbery since a total of JD 900, which the victim had collected from selling at the petrol station except for JD 30 which he had given to a colleague, was stolen from the body following the crime.

He said the victim, aged 50 years, is survived by a son and two daughters, and according to records had served the petrol station with honesty and integrity throughout the past 26 years.

WHO calls for integration of maternal, child health services

AMMAN (J.T.) — The regional office of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Monday submitted a working paper to a regional meeting here advocating the integration of maternal and child health services within primary health care programmes.

The paper said that birth spacing and family control are considered as among the main factors of reducing the rate of maternal mortality.

Health Minister Zaid Hamzeh attended Monday's meeting and took part in the discussion which centred on the role of primary health care to safeguard the health of all members of the society.

Hamzeh Sunday delegated Dr. Suleiman Qubain, the director of the Health Ministry's Primary and Basic Health Services Department, to deliver a speech at the outset of the meetings which have been organised in cooperation with WHO and attended by delegates from 23 Arab countries.

The meeting aims to promote policies and plans on primary health care services and those offered to women and children in particular.

Qubain said: "Jordan considers care for mothers and children under six years of age as a national responsibility because they together form nearly 40 per cent of the total number of the country's population."

"Jordan has given due care to the mothers and children through the various health care centres around the Kingdom that are provided with specialist nurses and midwives," Qubain noted.

Dr. Hussein Al Jaziri, the WHO representative, underlined the importance of care for mothers and infants. He said this sort of care should be integrated and incorporated into one, and cooperation from other sectors of the society is essential to safeguard the health of family members.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ A plastic art exhibition by eight Jordanian artists at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation in which more than 69 paintings are on display.
- ★ An art exhibition by Iraqi artist Latif Itawi at Al Wasiti Gallery for plastic art.
- ★ An art exhibition by Friends of Plastic Art in Gulf countries at the National Gallery.
- ★ The youth's art exhibition which displays 101 paintings showing the different aspects of social life in Jordan at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ An exhibition of ceramics by Iraqi artist Barwin Al Sarraf at Petra Bank Hall.
- ★ The Moldavian public art exhibition, which includes handicrafts, embroideries, and costumes representing the Moldavian folklore, at the Soviet Cultural Centre.
- ★ An exhibition of posters that show the dangers of AIDS at Al Raed Al Arabi School.

THEATRE

- ★ An Arabic play entitled "Ya 'Antar" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 7:00 p.m.

DIALOGUE

- ★ A special live TV conference via satellite on the American appreciation of Naguib Mahfouz and Arabic literature at the American Centre — 4:00 p.m.

LECTURE

- ★ A lecture by Dr. Alfred Hanel entitled "cooperative experiences for the development in the Third World" at the Goethe Institute — 7:00 p.m.

CONCERT

- ★ A concert by Messian Quartet which is a programme of French music by Ravel, Messiaen, and Debussy at the Baqa' laurante School Theatre — 8:00 p.m.



His Majesty King Hussein Monday receives the head of the Japanese parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Eitaro Itoyama, at the Royal Palace. Also present is Prime Minister Zaid Rifai (Petra photo).

Al Hussein, Japanese MP review Japan's role in Mideast peace

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein had a meeting here Monday with the head of Japanese parliament's foreign affairs committee, Mr. Eitaro Itoyama, with whom he reviewed Jordanian-Japanese relations and Tokyo's role in promoting the Middle East peace process.

The meeting, held at the Nadwa Palace, was attended by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and Japan's Ambassador to Jordan Makoto Watanabe.

Mr. Itoyama who arrived here late Sunday for a two-day visit to Jordan earlier met with Prime Minister Rifai and reviewed Middle East developments and efforts for the establishment of

peace in the Middle East. They also discussed Japanese-Jordanian relations in the presence of the Japanese ambassador.

Itoyama, who winds up his visit to Jordan Tuesday, also visited the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and examined its programmes designed to raise living standards of the Jordanian community through its various social development programmes.

NHF Director General In'am Al Mufri briefed Itoyama and his delegation on the foundation's different activities and projects that benefit the local communities. The delegation toured the foundation's sections and looked into its plans and programmes.

The Japanese delegation later

called at the Royal Scientific Society and met with its President Jawad Al Anani and senior officials.

Also Monday the Japanese delegation met with Minister of Planning Taber Kanaan and reviewed with him the general economic conditions in the Kingdom and development plans.

The minister spoke about the country's general taxation policies, opportunities for investment in the Kingdom and Jordan's services to countries of the region. The minister also called for promoting Jordanian-Japanese cooperation in economic fields.

The head of the delegation said he was impressed with the country's development projects and voiced satisfaction with the development of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Mubarak, Haj Hassan review cooperation

CAIRO (Petra) — Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Khaled Al Haj Hassan was Monday received by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak with whom he reviewed Jordanian-Egyptian cooperation in transport and telecommunications.

Haj Hassan said that the president voiced his support for the joint efforts of Jordanian-Egyptian committees working towards bolstering bilateral ties in implementation of resolutions adopted by the joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee in the interest of the peoples of the two countries.

The meeting was attended by

Jordan's Ambassador to Egypt Nabih Al Nimer.

Haj Hassan was in Cairo to take part in the board meeting of the Arab Maritime Bridge Company which groups Egypt, Jordan and Iraq.

The minister made a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, explaining that the meeting was called to look into means of expanding the company's activities and operations, increasing its capital to JD 30 million, up from JD 6 million and endorsing a 1989 budget.

Administrative issues will also be discussed according to the ministers.

Committee discusses Aqaba tourist camp

AQABA (Petra) — Tourism Minister Zubair Ajlouni visited Aqaba Monday and chaired a meeting of a special technical committee charged with conducting a study on developing the tourist camp along the southern coast of the port city.

The committee members discussed practical steps that should be taken in the implementation of the project with the aim to attract more tourists from Jordan and abroad.

The project is being carried out in cooperation with the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) and is

being implemented through the Tourist Investments Corporation, an arm of the Ministry of Tourism, which allocated JD 500,000 for the scheme.

According to plans the project entails building swimming pools, installing beach umbrellas, as well as the creation of sports facilities, health clinics, and chalets to let at reasonable prices.

Attending the meeting was the ARA president, the ministry's secretary general and representatives of the Jordan Hotel Association and the Jordan Travel Agents Association.

Higher council approves laws to plan agricultural policies

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Agricultural Council Monday announced its approval of a statute and a set of laws for itself paving the way for planning national agricultural policies.

A statement issued following the council's meeting said that the bylaws provide for the council to undertake policies that would promote agriculture, animal husbandry, marketing, and settle farming issues and matters related to land ownership, the distribution of water, tax incentives for agricultural projects and to submit proposals to the government on new laws and regulations concerning the agricultural sector in Jordan.

The council, which met under the chairmanship of Minister of

Agriculture Marwan Hmoud set up a committee to work out final regulations, and another to implement policies and carry out directives by His Majesty King Hussein on the development of the agricultural sector in Jordan.

The directives were contained in the King's speech to the comprehensive development conference which was held on Nov. 28.

The executive committee groups the Ministry of Agriculture's Secretary General and the directors general of the Agricultural Credit Corporation, the Jordan Cooperative Organisation, the Jordan Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company, the Jordan Valley Authority and a representative of the Ministry of Planning.

Arab broadcasters endorse future plans

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian delegation has returned to Amman after taking part in the Arab Broadcasting Union's meetings which were held in the Libyan capital — Tripoli, to discuss the union's future plans.

According to Nasouh Al Majali who led the Jordanian delegation, a general plan for the coming two years and the activities of the union's training centres in Baghdad, Damascus and Algiers were discussed and endorsed.

The Union's budget for the coming year will be \$1.5 million according to Majali who is also information advisor at the prime minister's office.

Majali said that the union meeting discussed also means of

promoting cooperation among broadcasting stations in the Arab World, exchanges experts, news and other information materials.

He said that the union has decided to make use of a special television channel offered by the satellites for television news exchanges among Arab TV stations at a cost of \$1 million annually in implementation of resolutions taken by the Arab ministers of information in their last meeting in Baghdad.

The meeting, he said, decided that the union should participate in a general conference by international broadcasting unions to be held in Washington in March 1989.

Number of AIDS cases rises to 20

Ministry reports 3 more AIDS patients

By Najwa Najjar
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The number of AIDS patients in Jordan has risen to 20, with the discovery of three additional patients with the incurable disease last week, according to the director of the Anti-AIDS Campaign Project, Dr. Hani Shammout.

Speaking to reporters Monday, Shammout, who is also head of the Communicable Diseases Department at the Ministry of Health, said that the three cases, although discovered last week, were not new cases.

Of the three patients, two had contracted Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) through blood transfusion and blood products, while one had contracted the disease through sexual contact — all prior to 1986.

Of the three patients, two were outside of Jordan, while one patient received blood in Jordan in 1984.

Shammout expects more cases to be discovered in Jordan.

However, he stresses that they would be the result of previous contact with the disease.

Shammout said 73 per cent of the patients were males and 27 per cent were females. The

reason that the percentage of females was higher than the worldwide figure of 10 per cent, "is that females here have a higher rate of blood exchange during pregnancy," he said.

However, males have a considerably higher ratio than females in Jordan, mainly due to a large number of remorphilias — Al Na'our in Arabic — which, Shammout explained affects only male children who begin to bleed profusely and unabated at the slightest cut on the body. 129 children with the disease were checked, nine are AIDS patients.

Blood and blood products are the main causes of AIDS in Jordan. To combat the spread of the disease and any further import of the disease into the Kingdom, Jordan has taken several measures since late 1986 to ensure that the quality of blood imported into the Kingdom would be AIDS-free. The measures in-

clude:

- Requiring the person donating blood in the respective country be checked for AIDS.

- Refusing to import any blood or blood product which does not include a certificate insuring the blood to be AIDS-free.

- Forbidding any blood or blood product to be brought into the country if the company or the people in charge refuse to be held responsible for the contact of AIDS.

- Preparing blood and blood products at a temperature of 60 degrees.

- Upon arrival of the blood and blood products, Jordan will conduct additional tests.

Since Jordan's AIDS problem is mainly due to blood and blood products, Shammout noted that these measures have been able to control 80 per cent of the cases. The remaining 20 per cent are mainly due to sexual contacts.

"There is no country in the world without AIDS," Shammout said, pointing out that the worldwide figure of AIDS patients is 125,000 and of AIDS carriers is between five to 10 million.

Since many Jordanian families and students live or study in over 120 countries abroad, "we can do nothing, but spread awareness,"

Armenians mount dedicated campaign to raise funds for quake victims

By Ara K. Voskian
Jordan Times National News Editor

AMMAN — The Armenian community in Jordan has mounted a dedicated campaign to raise funds and relief supplies for victims of the earthquake that hit Soviet Armenia last week, and "it is a race against time to get aid across to the disaster area in time to help the tens of thousands of needy," according to volunteers taking part in the effort.

All Armenian organisations in the Kingdom mobilised themselves within hours after the news of the disaster reached the outside world in the early hours of Wednesday. The relief and aid committee was set up, supported by five sub-committees covering the various regions of Jordan. A volunteer force of 150 was set up, including five doctors to offer expert opinion on the nature of medicine and equipment needed to cope with the situation in Soviet Armenia.

An initial consignment of medicine and supplies of five tonnes has already been dispatched aboard an Aeroflot flight to Moscow. "That was the maximum weight the plane could carry," said a spokesman for the committee. "We have

another six tonnes of supplies awaiting shipment."

The direct Armenian contribution is in addition to one planned of relief supplies dispatched by the government of Jordan Sunday under directives from His Majesty King Hussein.

The effort is spearheaded by the Armenian Bishop of Amman, Vahan Topalian, who was ordained earlier this month in Yerevan, the Armenian capital. Ironically, the bishop's first major task after his return was to cope with the anxiety and worries of the community over friends and relatives in the quake-hit area.

"Underscribable," that was how the bishop summed up the feeling of the community.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan visited the Armenian Community Centre Sunday to offer condolences over the disaster. He was received by Bishop Topalian, who conveyed to him the thanks and appreciation of the Armenian community for the concern and interest that the Jordanian government has shown in the relief effort.

According to the relief committee spokesman, "the Crown Prince's visit was highly appreciated by the Armenians. It raised the morale of our tiny

community which always had an unwavering allegiance to the Hashemite throne."

"The Royal Family has always shared our joys and sorrows," the spokesman added.

The relief and aid committee is collecting contributions in cash and kind from the 3,000-strong community in Jordan.

"We are maintaining constant contact with Moscow to coordinate our efforts," Topalian told the Jordan Times Sunday, the day the Armenian community held a memorial service at the Armenian-Orthodox Church in Ashrafieh for the tens of thousands of lives lost in the quake.

The bishop expressed profound thanks and appreciation for the various organisations and institutions as well as commercial establishments which contributed graciously to the campaign to raise help for the quake victims.

"We are receiving contributions of cash as well as in kind warm clothes and medicine — from all over the Kingdom," said the spokesman for the committee. "Our volunteers are at work from Irbid to Aqaba."

He noted that Jordanian drug companies not only contributed medicine and equipment — syringes, dressings etc. — but also cash to the relief

effort. The supplies are being gathered at the Armenian Community Centre at Ashrafieh for packing and dispatch. The first shipment left Monday and "we are seeking space on every available flight to the Soviet Union," the spokesman said.

"We are getting overwhelming support from all Jordanians," the spokesman said. "Many donations are being made by non-Armenians, and many have approached us offering their voluntary services," he said.

Many engineers and doctors — both Armenian and non-Armenian have approached the committee expressing readiness to fly to the Soviet Armenia to help relief and rescue efforts, the spokesman said. No plans have yet been finalised for dispatch of volunteers to the disaster area, he added.

The main beneficiaries of the funds raised through the committee are expected to be the orphaned children in Soviet Armenia, he said. It is estimated at least 20,000 children lost both their parents in the disaster, according to reports from Yerevan.

Anyone who wants to contribute to the effort can contact the Armenian patriarchate in Amman on telephone 775261.

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Editor-in-Chief:

DR. WALEED M. SADI

Editorial and advertising offices:

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Telephones: 667171-6, 670141-4, 684311, 684366

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

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Historical fear

WHEN Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told his countrymen recently that an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would pose a "permanent threat" to Israel, he must have meant something other than a security threat. Surely Shamir and his clique know only too well that a mini independent Palestinian state can never constitute a military threat to the all mighty Zionist state. This would lead to the conclusion that what the Likud mentality fears most is the moral and legal threats that would be posed by the creation of an independent Arab Palestine.

For deep in their souls, all Israelis entertain a guilty conscience for stealing a country from its indigenous people. Thus, some have characterised this as the biggest robbery on earth. An Arab state of Palestine would be a constant and permanent reminder to the Israelis of the colossal injustice perpetrated against the Palestinian Arabs at the hands of Israelis especially by extremists like Yitzhak Shamir whose terror tactics against the Arab inhabitants of Palestine contributed to the flight of many Palestinians.

This moral reminder would also have legal implications, for once there is a Palestinian state it will enjoy the legal capacity to adjudicate all outstanding legal issues arising from the creation of the state of Israel on Arab rights, both material and political. The Israeli phobia against an independent Arab Palestinian state is therefore generated by the anxiety over the probability that the state of Israel could become accountable by a legal and political entity in the form of free and independent Palestine for all score issues that were left unaddressed and unaccounted. This is the essence of the Israeli diagnosis that an independent Arab Palestinian state would be a "permanent threat" to Israel. This would also explain the Israeli complexes about dealing with the PLO no matter what it says or does.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

ALL three Jordanian Arabic dailies Monday discuss King Hussein's coming visit to France and the role which the European countries can play in helping in the process of establishing peace in the Middle East. Al Ra'i Arabic daily said that France is most eligible to play a leading role in this regard in view of its strong ties with the Arab World on the one hand and its good relations with both Moscow and Washington on the other. Jordan's ties with France have been fruitful and could be made to serve the cause of peace now that the PLO has recognised U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the paper noted. It said that the two countries can join forces to rally U.N. Security Council members and the world community to convene an international conference that would find a formula to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. The paper referred to statements by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai to Agence France Presse in which the prime minister said that the King's talks in Paris, following those held in Britain are clearly aimed at enlisting meaningful help from the European Community towards the establishment of peace.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic paper pays tribute to Sweden which lately played host to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and took a very positive attitude towards the Palestinian people and their just cause. Abdul Rahim Omar says Stockholm is to be commended for its approach to Washington, requesting it to enter into direct dialogue with the PLO and for its arrangement of a meeting between American Jewish leaders and the PLO chairman to discuss the Palestine question. Sweden's action reminds the people of the world of that country's neutrality and its contribution towards solving world problems, the writer says. He refers to the assassination of the former U.N. mediator Count Barnardot who was assassinated by Israeli terrorist groups while carrying out his mission in Palestine and says that Stockholm's new mission is consistent with that country's orientation towards helping the world community to live in peace.

Al Dustour newspaper writes on King Hussein's coming visit to Paris, describing it as part of the monarch's continued and consistent efforts to serve his nation. The Paris visit, coming in the wake of one paid to London, indicates that the King is pinning so much hope on the European role in convening the projected international Middle East peace conference since Europe is actually eligible to play a constructive role in that direction, the paper noted. It said that the European role is becoming more and more important in the wake of several positive developments around the world. The paper cites the PLO recognition of the U.N. Security Council resolutions, the great and warm welcome this declaration has drawn from nations around the world and the Arab World's unanimous backing for peace moves as being the major factors helping the Europeans at present to lead the way for establishing peace.

Sawt Al Shaab newspaper also wrote about the King's visit to France and his forthcoming talks with French President Francois Mitterrand on the Middle East problem. The visit to France is complementing that which the King made to London to discuss with the European leaders their constructive contributions towards solving the Palestine problem, the paper noted. Europe, the paper noted, can play a middle and a stable role towards solving this problem by paving the way for an international conference. Europe in general and France in particular have strong ties with the Arab World, and any tension in the Middle East is bound to have its negative effects on the Europeans, the paper noted. It said that the Arabs are more than delighted to see the Europeans welcoming the PLO declaration accepting U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and are encouraged by this stance it gives clear indications that the Europeans intend to do something to help the process of peace.

Middle East — heading towards peace?

By John Fullerton
Reuter

BEIRUT — To a Middle East habitually beset by violent competition for power and wealth, 1988 brought an uncommon measure of moderation and pragmatic compromise.

"True, there were battles, raids and riots — but for many the year marked change for the better," said an Arab diplomat.

It took Palestinian youths armed with stones to challenge what they saw as Arab inertia and Israeli intransigence in an uprising that altered the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The intifada (uprising) in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip took both Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) by surprise.

It projected the 41-year-old campaign for a Palestinian homeland onto television screens worldwide and propelled PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat into proclaiming a Palestinian state and implicitly recognising Israel.

The Palestinian movement was cajoled into compromise by fears that Israel would annex the

West Bank after Jordan severed administrative ties with the area in July.

More than 70 countries recognised the Palestinian state, but an outgoing U.S. administration snubbed Arafat by refusing him a visa to address the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

The refusal was widely seen as a pique on the part of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, whose own peace mission aimed at giving Palestinians limited self-rule ended in failure.

In Arab eyes, the visa issue diminished U.S. stature, and governments waited to see if president-elect George Bush could restore some of Washington's tarnished credibility.

An Israeli general election failed to produce an outright victor, with the balance between the hardline Likud Bloc and the more conciliatory Labour Party held by religious zealots.

Israel also projected its hard-line image of power politics with one of its biggest raids deep into Lebanon in six years, sending airborne commandos to attack Palestinian bases just south of Beirut on December 9.

In contrast to the battle of wills in the backstreets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it was quiet, persistent diplomacy by U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar that helped silence the guns in the Iran-Iraq war.

While peace talks in Geneva have so far failed to produce a final settlement, for millions of Iraqis and Iraqis the August 20 ceasefire was a welcome end to eight years of agony.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, having successfully harnessed Arab distaste for Tehran's revolutionary brand of Islam for his war effort, emerged as peace-maker by embracing the U.N. ceasefire proposals.

For his part, Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini described the ceasefire as a poisoned chalice.

No-one is certain how many people died in the war. Some observers estimated a million casualties on both sides.

Neither side made significant territorial or political gains in a conflict that pitted a larger Iranian war machine against a smaller but more mobile Arab foe.

"The Iraqis had the firepower, aircover and logistics to provide an effective mobile defence," said one analyst. "But they could not sustain offensive operations deep into Iran."

The Iraqis had the numbers for "human wave" assaults, but lacked industrial muscle to maintain a high level of military effort for any length of time, he added.

Egypt returned to the Arab mainstream after nearly a decade of ostracism for its 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

Gulf peace also promised stabilisation of the world oil market, with Iran and Iraq accepting equal output quotas and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreeing to cut total output in a glutted oil market.

But hope that an early release for at least some of the 18 Westerners held by militants in Lebanon would follow the Iran-Iraq ceasefire failed to materialise.

Spectacular violence took the form of a two-week hijacking last April, the longest ever.

A Kuwaiti airliner with mem-

bers of the state's ruling family on board was seized on a flight from Bangkok, forced to Mashhad in Iran, then Cyprus, and finally Algeria.

Unidentified gunmen, demanding the release of 17 Arabs jailed in Kuwait for bomb attacks there in 1983, killed two Kuwaiti passengers before freeing 71 other hostages.

The ordeal for the remaining 31 passengers and crew ended on April 20 after 362½ hours. The hijackers melted away to fight another day. Two, both pro-Iranian Lebanese, were later reported killed in one of Beirut's innumerable civil war feuds.

On the domestic front, pragmatism took centre stage.

Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi launched reforms that eased travel restrictions and loosened state controls.

In Algeria, riots triggered by economic austerity measures encouraged President Chadli Benjedid to pledge reforms in the ruling National Liberation Front.

President Hussein also launched economic and political change to match Iraqi expectations with the advent of peace.

Previously socialist Iraq offered state enterprises for sale, relaxed import restrictions, allowed prices to rise and lifted taxes to boost the private sector and encourage peacetime investment.

Hussein's Baath Party, which has ruled unchallenged for 20 years, said a multi-party system would be allowed and promised a pardon for people convicted of or sought for political actions.

But there was little good cheer for Lebanon, traditional sounding board for the region's labyrinthine politics.

Israel launched 25 air raids on Palestinian and pro-Iranian Lebanese targets in the south of the country before the December 9 commando assault.

Lebanese parliamentarians twice failed to elect a new president, rejecting a compromise candidate backed by the United States and neighbouring Syria.

As Lebanon teetered on the edge of formal partition after 13 years of civil war, Syria's role as the major power broker faced a new challenge.

One year later Palestinian uprising continues

By Dan Williams

NABLUS, Israeli-Occupied West Bank — In a small sitting room decorated with a velvet tapestry of the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim holy place, young Palestinian men showed each other their scars.

Abu Suhai, 22, showed a half-dollar-size smudge on his shoulder, the remnant of a bullet wound he got in March. Izzedin, only 18, sheepishly pointed out a dime-size welt on his thigh, a September injury.

As if to assure everyone that his injury was as severe as anyone else's, he blurted out, "the bullet is still inside." His comrades laughed.

In other countries, in other times, the youths might have been comparing football injuries, so commonplace are their tales of danger and pain. In the year since the Arab uprising against Israeli rule began on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a cat-and-mouse struggle with the troops has become almost routine for many Palestinians.

The intifada, as the uprising is called in Arabic, has its wide wings, its tragedies, failures and victories, but it has also become, day by day, stamped on the fabric of everyday existence. Observers and participants in the ongoing battle say that, whatever the final outcome the Palestinians will never be the same again.

"The intifada has become a way of life. I don't think I can imagine what we would be without it," declared Said Kanaan, a businessman and prominent Palestinian spokesman in Nablus.

"The intifada is a state of mind," commented Gen. Avram Mitzna, the Israeli military commander of the West Bank. "The mood, the feeling, is that the Arabs have gained something. They are able to control their future. They took their lives into their own hands. It is impossible to take this from them — impossible."

Each side in the conflict appears willing to dig in for the long haul. Arab leaders are talking about rebuilding the area's shattered economy and creating institutions such as trade and professional unions to cement a

new feeling on nationhood. The sentiment was encouraged by the declaration of an independent Palestinian state issued in Algiers last month by the legislative arm of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Israeli officials speak less of crushing the rebellion and more of managing it by asserting Israeli control in every community in the occupied territories so that Arab nationalist feelings are not transformed into de facto self-rule.

"The fight is now for political control," said Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli expert on West Bank and Gaza affairs. "The cost is not unbearably high to either side. That's why it can go on for a long time."

Predictions of a protracted struggle are subject to wild-card variables, Benvenisti admits. On the one hand, many Arab hardliners are chafing under the gradualist approach of the main leadership of the uprising, while in Israel, extremist politicians clamor for tougher measures against the just stone-throwers and demonstrators but also the leaders behind the scenes.

"This thing is always subject to lunacy," Benvenisti said with a sigh.

The Palestinian rebellion began in the Gaza Strip a year ago Dec. 9. The first demonstration was sparked, apparently, by rumours that a traffic crash the previous day, involving a truck driven by an Israeli, had been an act of retaliation for the fatal stabbing of an Israeli plastics merchant. Four Gazans were killed and seven injured when the truck struck their two vans.

Military officials said another source of tension was a deportation order against a local Muslim leader.

Since then, about 330 Palestinians have died and thousands have been wounded in the intifada. More than 6,000 Arabs are in jail at any one time, many without recourse to a trial. In a recent study, Benvenisti estimated the Arab population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to be 1.7 million.

Through it all, the daily lives of Arabs have been bent into shapes unimaginable a year ago, when youths in the Gaza Strip first picked up stones to hurl at Israeli

traffic. Nablus, with a population of 900,000, is the largest city on the West Bank and was one of the first to take up the intifada with vigour.

Within two days after the intifada began in Gaza, boys in Nablus took up stones to attack Israeli soldiers. On the first day of the uprising here, three youths were shot to death, since then, almost 2,000 Nablusians have been wounded, according to hospital records.

"Nablus considers itself the capital of resistance," said Mitzna, the Israeli commander. "It's a tough nut to crack."

The streets of Nablus present clear signs of dual authority. On almost every corner, an apparently idle youth keeps watch for troops movements and whistles warnings to cohorts posted at the next intersection.

"Fili jaish?" asked a boy entering the cashab carrying a small plastic bag of oranges. "Are the soldiers in there?"

His question was repeated up the line of vegetable stalls until it reached a vendor with a view of the next cross street.

Pausing amid his usual calls of "tomatoes," "pepper" and "garlic," the vendor replied, "no soldiers," and the boy calmly weaved through the market on his way home.

For the better part of a year, students met in secret classrooms to try to keep up with their studies. Israel kept the schools shut from February to May and closed them again in July, making the holding of even impromptu classes illegal, subject to jail and fines. Authorities of the Israeli civil administration reopened the schools last week, three months later than usual, and warned that they would be closed again if students joined protests.

In their ample spare time, youths rename streets after martyrs and hand out leaflets with the latest protest schedules.

Women, who in traditional Arab society are cloistered in the home, sometimes take part in public protests. Jail is a badge of honour.

Fierce-eyed militants collect taxes from store owners, prorated to reflect their reduced business,

and deliver bread to families hard-pressed by the series of strikes and business closures.

The hard-core rebels, many toughened by years spent in Israeli jails, often live a fugitive life in the maze of alleys in the city's crumbling cashab. One, named Walid, recounted how soldiers have come to his parents' home, surrounding it "Chicago-style" waiting to catch him — and, he thinks, shoot him. He never visits.

A genuine quest for peace

By Daoud Kuttab

ISRAELI OFFICIALS and some critics in the U.S. have dismissed the results of the 19th session of the Palestine National Council, held in Algiers, claiming that the Palestinian Declaration of Independence and the political programme that accompanied it are no more than a propaganda gimmick.

Their contention is that the PLO has not officially recognised Israel, has not nullified its charter and has not renounced terrorism. These sceptics point out that the PLO's acceptance of U.N. Resolution 242 is conditional and that the Palestinians fall short of American demands. There was nothing new in the PNC decisions, they say.

The question of recognising Israel is by far the most important one. In press conferences held after the PNC, top PLO officials contended that the PLO had not explicitly recognised Israel. But was this ever a demand by either the U.S. administration or the world community for PLO participation in peaceful negotiations? I believe the answer is no.

Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, whom Israel and the U.S. want to come to the negotiating table, also don't recognise Israel. The U.S. has always demanded that the Palestinians accept the right of Israel to exist. The declaration of independence and the political statement answer this key issue in a clear and unambiguous way.

The Palestinian Declaration of Independence said that the U.N. Partition Plan of 1947, which divided mandatory Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, "provides international legitimacy with the conditions it needs to guarantee the Arab Palestinians' right of self-determination and statehood." The declaration also noted that the new state of Palestine "is a peace-loving state committed to the principles of peaceful coexistence and will work with all the countries in the area for peace based on justice and mutual respect."

The political statement of the Palestine council called for the convening of an international conference to be based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, and the guarantee of Palestinian national rights. The PNC's political statement noted that the "international conference should reach a comprehensive solution that will provide peace and security for all, with mutual acceptance." The word Israel or Israelis is mentioned more than 10 times, and the word "armed struggle" doesn't appear at all in either document.

As to the question of the PLO Charter, this is no longer considered the basis of the Palestinian struggle.

Past PNC resolutions have consistently affirmed a commitment to the Palestine Covenant. The 19th PNC made no reference to the covenant. For Palestinians and the PLO, the document of

reference from November 15, 1988, onwards is the Declaration of Independence, and not the covenant. Almost every clause in the PLO Covenant has now been contradicted — or superseded by a PNC resolution. The covenant is now as invalid as the Likud's logo depicting a gun across both banks of the Jordan or their theme about the two banks of the Jordan River.

The resolutions of the Algiers PNC are the statements of an organisation interested in a genuine peace. Instead of encouraging these positive developments, Israeli leaders attacked the latest PLO resolutions. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said the statements complicate things and make convening the international conference more difficult. He added that there is nothing new in them.

Maybe these resolutions complicate things for the Labour Party. Or maybe they make it more difficult for the Likud, which is calling for direct talks — something the PLO is now accepting without any preconditions, as Yasser Arafat said in his post-PNC press conference. But they do not complicate things for any Israeli interested in a genuine and lasting peace.

The writer is a Palestinian journalist, West Bank editor of the Nazareth-based As-Senara and the Mideast Mirror. He attended the PNC in Algiers. The article is reprinted from The Jerusalem Post.

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Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev — lunch with Queen Elizabeth II and talks with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Hint of royal trip to Moscow sparks controversy

By Maureen Johnson
The Associated Press

LONDON — Reports that Queen Elizabeth II will soon receive an invitation to visit Moscow, and that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher doesn't want her to go, have thrust Britain's two most powerful women into controversy.

The notion of a Soviet visit is speculation. But it highlights the delicate nature of Britain's constitutional monarchy; and the headlines it produces fuel a public perception that the queen and prime minister don't get along. The current flurry dates back to the announcement two weeks ago that Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev will visit Buckingham Palace when he stops off here en route home from Washington.

The next day The Evening Standard, a London newspaper, reported from Moscow that the queen was likely to be invited for her first visit ever to the Soviet Union.

The idea sent a frisson through royal-watching circles, where it was quickly noted that the Russian royal family, murdered by Bolsheviks in the Russian revolution, were the queen's ancestors. Buckingham Palace insisted it knew of no invitation, and that if it came the queen would react "on the advice of ministers" — meaning that like all her official foreign journeys, this one would have to receive government approval.

The following Sunday, several newspapers reported that Thatcher would block such a visit. They said the feeling was that it would hand the Soviets a propaganda coup, and that the queen probably would want to stay away out of respect for her murdered ancestors.

The source of the Sunday reports was later alleged to be Bernard Ingham, Thatcher's press secretary, who regularly briefs Sunday newspaper correspondents.

Some commentators believe the newspaper reports were simply

trial balloons — that the Soviets had floated the idea through the Evening Standard and had gotten the government's reply through from Ingham.

If so, Thatcher had acted entirely properly, since it is for her, not the queen, to decide on issues with political implications. But for the opposition Labour Party, it was a handy weapon to turn against Thatcher.

In parliament, they jeered their disbelief as Thatcher angrily denied vetoing a royal visit to

Moscow.

"The matter has not been discussed in any way," she said. "It is totally hypothetical."

The Labourites charged that Thatcher, 63 and nearly a decade in power, had forgotten who was the real queen.

"This looks like envy on the part of the prime minister given that a royal visit would be a glittering affair. It would be one in the eye for queen Margaret," claimed Labour's George Robertson.

Q. When a woman learns of her husband intending a second marriage, is it permissible for her to tell him that he may not bring his second wife in her home and that he must provide a second accommodation for her. Can she say that even when her husband has only a small house provided him by the company and he has only a limited income which may not be sufficient to keep two houses. Can he choose a Christian woman for his second wife?

(Name and address withheld)

A. ISLAM views marriage as a relationship between human beings. Therefore, the rights and privileges as well as the feelings and emotions of each partner in this relationship must be taken into consideration. Since the woman is the weaker partner in a marriage relationship, Islam has taken care to ensure that her rights are respected. When a man defaults on his duties towards his wife, this constitutes sufficient grounds for the nullification of the marriage, if an Islamic court determines that the situation cannot be mended. Such a nullification can be enforced despite the objections of the defaulting husband.

Every married woman is entitled to have a decent home of the standard to which women in her social status are accustomed. If she agrees to marry a man of

limited income, she implicitly consents to have a home of the standard her husband can afford. Whatever may be the family circumstances, her right to a decent home is undeniable. This is part of something greater to which she is also entitled by right, namely, a family atmosphere based on care, affection and compassion. In short, a homely life.

It is well known that Islam allows a man to marry up to four wives at a time. When a man intends to marry a second wife, it is not obligatory that he should seek or obtain his first wife's consent. But she remains entitled to all her rights and privileges. The second wife also enjoys similar rights. Both of them are entitled to equal treatment in everything which is under their husband's control. He should provide them with living accommodation of equal standard. He cannot, say, give one of them a detached, two-story villa with a garden and accommodate the other in a small apartment in a large block of flats. If he does that, then he is guilty of unfair and unequal treatment.

"When we consider this very carefully, we realise that it is the duty of any man who intends to marry a second wife to make sure that he can support both of them on an equal basis. The Koranic instruction is very clear: "If you fear that you may not treat them equally, then limit yourself to one

By John West
Special to the Jordan Times

JORDAN, a country with over 30 per cent of its population in full time education, and one of the most advanced service sector economies in the Middle East, has no law to protect intellectual property. With a draft legislation now in the final stages, it is good time to examine the state of play in the publishing industry in the Kingdom.

In fact, to be accurate, there is no law specifically designed to protect intellectual property. Currently valid as a mechanism is an obscure sub-section of a law from the old Ottoman code, dated to 1911. Its effectiveness, however, can be judged from the case of Dr. Salim Kaswani.

Dr. Kaswani is a part-time lecturer in law at the University of Jordan, who in 1983 published a textbook to supplement his students' course materials. In 1984 he noticed that pirate copies of his work were appearing under the arms of scholars entering the lecture hall, and was informed that they had been bought for JD 2, as opposed to the official price of JD 3. Further investigation led him to the source of his unexpected competition, a small photocopying booth nestled just

outside the main gates of the university. There a confrontation ensued.

"Please desist," Dr. Kaswani politely asked his imitator, assuring him that no further action would be taken if he complied. His adversary not only did not deny the allegations of copying but evidently regarded Dr. Kaswani's request as an unwarranted intrusion. He replied to the effect that it was common knowledge that once a book appeared in public it became common property. Dr. Kaswani went to court.

Nearly five years later the case is unresolved. At one stage the relevant articles seemed so opaque that fresh legal experts had to be appointed to determine whether prosecution was viable under the provisions of the law. Dr. Kaswani won his case in the Court of First Degree, and compensation of some JD 10,000, but the defendant appealed and the case is currently under review at the court of appeals.

Although Dr. Kaswani's dogged attempts to secure protection of his work have yet to meet with success, he has become a cause celebre among authors at large. Colleagues at the University of Jordan claim that the mere whisper of his name often has the desired salutary effect on those sus-

pected of pirating other academic texts. Some of them have been launched similarly ambitious litigations, which likewise await a final verdict. Overall, however, the situation remains unchanged, and pirates unchallenged.

Existing law

Dr. Mohammad Hammouri, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, and himself a former professor at the university, described the disuse into which what tenuous protection there is has fallen. "If you want to protect your intellectual property, you have to lodge registration in the Ministry of Education. Nobody has done so, because nobody knows of the provisions, and existing law has seemed ineffective... they don't even have a department (at the Ministry of Education) to handle the registration of intellectual property." There has been an arrangement whereby authors could register with the Department of Libraries, Documentation, and National Archives, and receive a deposit number for their work, but the minister stressed that this was a purely temporary, administrative arrangement and did not entail legal protection. "You can't put people under an obligation just

like this — there must be a law."

It is sometimes argued that, especially in developing countries, the absence of safeguards for intellectual property is a good thing. Knowledge should not be held ransom to money, nor people deprived of instruction or entertainment by copyright. In answer, Dr. Hammouri pursued the analogy with physical or financial possessions that is implicit in the term "intellectual property."

"I find it very strange that if you write something, it should be open to anyone to take it as his own. Everyone should be protected, as you would protect other forms of property."

To expand this argument, suppose a similar situation pertained to other forms of property, and you can easily imagine that once a builder had had his third house removed from him, a carpenter his fifteenth bed, and a taxi-driver his sixth car, we should all soon be living in the open, sleeping on the ground and walking everywhere. Those who argue that intellectual output should be a public good assume that it is a constant, whereas in fact, especially in developing countries, it is a fragile variable. Where there are no incentives to produce, there will be no production, and countries who concentrate exclusively on knowledge distribution at the expense of knowledge creation will find themselves in the same kind of intellectual lethargy as some centrally planned economies now face in their material economies.

The analogy bears close examination. Ibrahim Sharbain, Managing Director of the Jordan Book Centre Company, estimates that approximately 100 titles per year are legitimately published by reputable companies in Jordan. He expects this figure to jump to nearly one thousand within a year of the implementation of the new law.

Piracy, piracy

"There's only one problem we face as publishers in Jordan," he said, "piracy."

"As soon as we sell in big quantities, the pirates immediately start printing in Lebanon." Beirut is the centre of the Middle East pirating industry; and most bestseller pirate copies are printed there and then imported, making them easy to prevent once the legal apparatus is in place. Smaller editions of a poorer quality are printed locally, and can be difficult to trace, since in Amman alone there are 155 small printing shops. If it is an offence to knowingly sell pirate material, however, this flow too can be easily stemmed.

The main market exists in educational books. A book from which a legitimate publisher may draw a slender profit margin at JD 2 can be lucratively repro-

duced by pirates at JD 1. Sometimes educational institutions themselves place orders for pirate copies, as by cutting their book expenses they can lavish more of their precious funds on developing other areas of education. Sharbain feels that such a policy, however, works against national interests in the long run, as it prevents the Jordanian publishing industry from really getting off the ground.

They think "we need to pirate books to provide them to the students", but they never thought that the authors might be Jordanians, and the publishers too. Dictionaries are prime meat for pirates, who last year sold as many as 15,000 copies of the Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary.

To some extent, pirates have been damaging themselves by their own sloppiness. Many a student who has opted for the cheaper illicit version has found ten page lacunae, illegible print or missing diagrams in the middle of a vital chapter. Such once bitten scholars are twice shy when it comes to buying pirate books again. The black market as a whole, however, relies on a rotating clientele of students who graduate every year. It is not therefore greatly dented by poor customer service.

Sharbain is heartened by the new legislation, which he thinks presages the launch of the Jordanian publishing industry. "We feel as though the government, indirectly, is encouraging us to publish more books," he said, adding that much smaller print runs would now be viable commercial propositions since publishers would in future be assured of 100 per cent of its potential sales, instead of a fraction of them. Thus, there would be much greater variety, and of course, more opportunity for first time Jordanian authors. "If you can publish only a few books, and you have to keep worrying about piracy in Jordan will never expand." General readers, as opposed to the captive market of students, will particularly benefit.

The Kingdom's approximately 100 titles a year, for a population of 3 million, adds up to a ratio of one new book per 30,000 citizens by comparison with a United States ratio of one book to 3,500 (75,000 titles for a population of 240 million).

Of course, many other obstacles remain to be overcome before the publishing industry can reach its full potential, not the least of which are the lack of the reading habit among even highly educated sectors of the population, and the final eradication of illiteracy. But by this timely law, the government will unleash the creative forces that have been restrained for so long. It bodes well for the future of culture in the Kingdom.

Polygamy and right of wives

(wife)". It may so happen that a married man finds himself deep in love with another woman and she consents to be his wife, knowing that he is of limited means. He should reflect, however, that marriage is not a temporary arrangement. He should look to the future and consider whether or not he is committing himself to something with which he cannot cope. He must never overlook his duties towards his first wife, or indeed the second.

The first question he should ask himself is whether he would be able to maintain two homes. It is not lawful for a man who has married two women to force them to live in the same house, whether it is big or small, unless both of them agree to that arrangement, without coercion. This is due to the fact that in such circumstances it is only natural for them to harbour feelings of jealousy and hostility towards each other. Each of them will be always on the watch, trying to discover any sign of favouritism which her husband shows towards his other wife. That will inevitably lead to endless quarrels and the atmosphere in the family home will be unhealthy for the upbringing of the children. Moreover, why should a wife be exposed to such a situation which enhances ill-feelings? On the basis of this, it is perfectly legitimate for the first wife to tell her husband when he embarks on a

second marriage that he must not at any time enforce on her the burden of sharing her home with his second wife. If she makes that clear to him and he nevertheless tries to impose it, then this constitutes a basis for the nullification of the marriage, if so she desires. She will be entitled to all her rights.

Having said that, I realise that not every woman who finds herself in such a situation would like to have her marriage nullified. A wife may still be young and she may have young children who need to have both their parents around. She may have no feasible alternative. If she gets her marriage nullified, she may face the problem of being separated from her children. Many a woman would sacrifice their happiness in order to stay with her children. Therefore, it is only right that a woman is given the freedom of choice with regard to the type of home she may have when her husband marries a second or a third wife. As I have already said, a man may not force his two wives to share one house without their consent. If both of them agree to such sharing, they are forgoing part of their right and this must be on the basis of free choice.

A husband may arrange for both his wives to have separate rooms in one house only if such is the nature of housing people in the same social status as his wives

have. If, for example, a man's wife comes from a family which shares her home with another family, then such a shared accommodation is the type of her equals. He may, then, ask her to have separate rooms in a house which she shares with his other wife.

When we consider all this, we find that in the case the lady reader cites, the husband will be ill-advised to marry a second wife. His company is unlikely to give him a second home for the second wife. Therefore, he will have to rent a flat for her which will constitute a heavy financial burden and will take a considerable portion of his income. If he is thinking of getting both his wives to share his small accommodation, he is depriving both of them of their rights. As we have said, he cannot do that unless both of them freely consent. What we have also to consider is that Islam allows polygamy only as a solution to social problems. When a man is happy with his family life with his first wife, he should not think of marrying again. His own happiness is at stake.

The other point the lady reader raises is whether it is permissible for a man who is married to a Muslim wife to choose a Christian for his second wife. The answer is that it is permissible, but far from recommended.

— Arab News.

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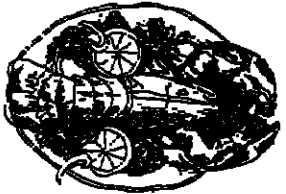
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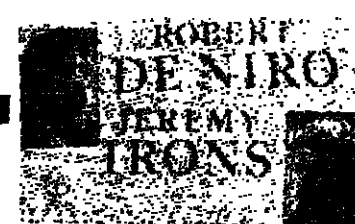
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Libya, Tunisia agree on practical economic integration programme

TUNIS (R) — Libya and Tunisia have agreed on a long list of practical steps towards integration, including free trade across the border, linking of electricity grids and joint offshore exploration for oil and gas.

A joint statement issued Sunday after a three-day visit to Tunisia by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said he and Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali hoped other steps would follow to accelerate the process of uniting the Maghreb and eventually the whole Arab World.

The two countries have created a new joint institution, known as the Executive Committee, to make sure that decisions on cooperation, integration and unity go ahead, it added.

Libya and Tunisia had already agreed most of the practical steps in principle but ministers who prepared for the talks between Qadhafi and Ben Ali either took them a stage forward or set deadlines for carrying them out.

They exchanged instruments of ratification on a customs and trade agreement which allows free trade in Libyan and Tunisian goods with a local manufacturing input of at least 40 per cent.

Apparently to solve the problem of Tunisian imports of goods subsidised by the Libyan government, technical groups will present studies on standardising prices of basic goods by the middle of next year, the communiqué added.

A high-tension electricity line

In the more distant future, the two countries agreed to coordinate industrial development so that each would use its installed capacity to the best advantage, the statement said.

The accords fit in well with Tunisia's emphasis on realistic and practical steps rather than the kind of grand political gestures Qadhafi has made in previous unity attempts.

The Libyan leader told the Tunisian parliament Friday that he favoured a "constitutional unity" between Libya and Tunisia but he has not tried to force the Tunisians into accepting his ambitious objectives.

Tunisian officials have stressed that integration with Libya is part of a slower process towards linking the two countries with Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania in a Greater Maghreb.

The heads of the state of the five countries met for the first time ever in Algeria in June and further progress depends on another summit for which no date has been set, diplomats say.

Qadhafi drove back to Libya Sunday after a last round of talks in the morning with Ben Ali, followed by lunch under canvas and a display of bedouin horsemanship.

The Libyan leader spent most of his visit in the south, which has benefited most from the reopening of the border a year ago, shortly after Ben Ali removed ageing president Habib Bourguiba from power.

Kuwait adjusts interest-rate structure

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait's central bank Sunday enforced an increase in the discount rate on Kuwaiti dinar denominated loans to 7.5 per cent and consequently imposed a new interest rate ceiling of 10 per cent.

An advance notice of the move was given by the bank's Governor Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sabah to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Saturday.

Bankers said that the basic rate was raised from five to 7.5 per cent, while the interest rate ceiling

usually applicable to loans payable over a period of time exceeding 12 months, was raised from 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent.

Sheikh Salem said that the central bank also imposed new interest floors for deposits, but kept interest rates payable for saving accounts at its former rate of 4.5 per cent.

Bankers, who talked on condition they not be named, said the measures were aimed at augmenting the profitability of local commercial banks whose per-

formance is expected to show a retreat in 1988 from a year earlier.

This was seen as mainly the result of the massive movement of funds to deposits denominated in foreign currencies in search of higher interest rates.

The bankers also predicted the new interest rate structure would help convince investors to return to dinar-denominated portfolios. "The new price structure which is tied to the central bank's discount rate is intended to bring the

interest rates for dinar-denominated portfolios into line with rates applicable to key foreign currencies at international markets," Sheikh Salem said to KUNA.

As a result of the new regulations, the interest rate ceiling on loans for periods less than one year should not exceed the discount rate by more than 9.5 per cent, while the interest on loans for periods of more than one year should not exceed 2.5 per cent above the basic rate, the gov-

ernor said. However, Sheikh Salem said that the new interest rate structure "will not apply to loans to non-residents and to interbank transactions."

He also said that the new rates would not be applicable to loans denominated in foreign currencies.

Sheikh Salem said that interest rates on loans for financing consumption goods will remain at their old level of six per cent.

Otaiba wants OPEC to regain power

ABU DHABI (AP) — Oil Minister Mana Saeed Otaiba says that OPEC should increase its oil production to at least 20 million barrels a day to control the market and push prices higher, the Al Khaleej daily reported Monday.

He said in an interview that the overall output by the 13-member Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) should later be boosted to 23 or 24 million barrels a day.

OPEC's ministerial council meeting in Vienna last month increased the daily quota from 15.06 million barrels daily to 18.5 million barrels as of Jan. 1.

That was aimed at curbing runaway production by several OPEC members in violation of the 1986 ceiling that was driving prices well below OPEC's benchmark of \$18 a barrel.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) reported earlier this month that OPEC's overall production last month soared to 22.6 million barrels a day, 1.3 million barrels a day up on October's output, a five-year high.

The Middle East Economic Survey, a respected oil industry

weekly published in Cyprus, reported Monday that several OPEC members, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Venezuela, were over-producing by several million barrels a day under the 1986 ceiling.

It said the IEA estimate for November production "may well be on the low side."

Otaiba dismissed as premature a call for an OPEC summit by Venezuelan President-elect Carlos Andres Perez, saying: "I don't think such a summit now will be able to resolve OPEC problems."

He said in an interview with Al Khaleej's managing editor Gasan Tabbouq: "OPEC cannot regain its leadership of a weak, unstable world oil market with a gradually shrinking share, while alternative energy sources are continuously replacing oil."

"If OPEC is to become strong and restore its position, then it must return to increasing the production ceiling, but to a reasonable limit that would not overwhelm the market nor keep a shortage in it," Otaiba said.

Otaiba stressed that OPEC must gradually increase its oil

production ceiling until it reached the minimum platform which would enable it once more to regain leadership of the world oil market.

"OPEC... must raise the ceiling... at the next meeting," he declared.

The organisation's next biannual conference will be in the summer, but no date has yet been set.

Asked to what level production should be hiked, Otaiba said: "According to the market's situation and potential. We may mention the figure 20 million barrels a day. Of course, such an increase will come at the expense of the prices, therefore there should be a balance between prices and production."

"If OPEC produces between 23 and 24 million barrels a day, it could continue on this level without an increase for some period, until the oil market starts reflecting better prices, reaching the \$18 price, our current objective, then gradually increase it," Otaiba said.

He said that price-fixing and production ceilings should be separated, conceding that it was free market prices, rather than

OPEC's benchmark, that have prevailed for much of the year.

"Pricing has become the specialisation of the oil market and OPEC has reached this stage after it failed to become the price fixer alone," he said.

"It could have played that role in coordination with non-OPEC oil producers who are currently producing 60 per cent of the world oil," he noted.

But he added: "OPEC's power is not in a higher price alone, but also in influencing the oil market... that would not be achieved unless OPEC member states were allowed to increase production and OPEC took its share in the market... not waiting for other producers to attain maximum capacities, then having OPEC members produce within the remaining limits."

The production ceilings he advocated would enable OPEC members to comfortably adhere to their quotas "by word and action," Otaiba said.

The UAE indicated after the November Vienna agreement that it was dissatisfied with its quota of 988,000 barrels a day, 40,000 barrels more than its quota under the 1986 accord. But

it said it will observe the new ceiling.

The federation had sought a quota of 1.5 million barrels a day and had been producing at that level for months.

The IEA estimated that the UAE's November output has soared to two million barrels a day.

The UAE, with oil reserves of 120 billion barrels, second only to Saudi Arabia, has the capacity to produce four million barrels a day, Otaiba said.

"Is it logical for the UAE to produce its oil over 500 years while other countries are producing theirs over 10, 20 or 30 years?" he asked.

Otaiba said there were no differences over prices or production among the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The GCC, which groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE, will hold its annual summit conference in Bahrain next week.

The Bahrain-based Gulf News Agency said the GCC oil ministers will meet for an extraordinary session in Riyadh Saturday.

GCC allows Oman to keep some tariffs

NICOSIA (R) — Gulf Arab finance ministers have agreed to allow Oman to carry on protecting key industries by taxing competing imports, despite a pact guaranteeing free trade between their states.

Mohammad Al Alawi, Oman's representative on a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) financial committee, was quoted as saying Oman could extend its tariffs on cement, plastics and asbestos, but taxes on five other commodities would be dropped.

Finance ministers of the GCC, which groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), met in Bahrain Sunday to prepare for a GCC summit.

Alawi, quoted by the Oman News Agency, did not specify which tariffs would be dropped,

but said some goods involved "were not produced by Oman and others were produced by industries which had been able... to win markets outside of Oman."

Oman imposed a 20 per cent duty on cement imports several years ago to protect local industry after accusing producers in the UAE of dumping their surplus in the sultanate.

In 1983, the GCC states agreed to abolish tariffs on each other's products, but exempted on certain goods from Oman.

The Gulf News Agency quoted Saudi Finance Minister Mohammad Abul Khail as saying the ministers had agreed to extend the tariffs on Omani cement, plastics and asbestos for two years.

Saudi budget may cut spending

NICOSIA (R) — Saudi Arabia may make further heavy cuts in its spending in 1989 as oil revenues drift at their lowest levels in 15 years, diplomats and economists said Monday.

They predicted the kingdom, when it announces its new budget at the end of the month, could chop as much as 10 per cent out of 1988 spending estimated at around 141 billion riyals (\$38 billion).

The tightening would follow a series of sharp and painful cuts made every year since 1981, when oil revenue reached a peak of just over \$100 billion.

"Most people expect a smaller budget — how much, no one is sure," said one Riyadh-based diplomat.

Despite last month's OPEC agreement to cut oil production to raise prices, diplomats think oil revenue is unlikely to rise substantially in 1989 from this year's estimated \$16 billion, and may even fall.

They said cuts would be made as the few projects still going on

wind down and as maintenance work is shifted from Westerners to less-expensive Asians. Government payments might also be stretched out.

The government would continue to bridge gap between income and spending by drawing on reserves built up during the oil boom and through a bond programme introduced with last year's budget.

"A lot depends on how they project their revenue," said the diplomat. "I suspect they are waiting till the last moment possible to see how the price of oil responds to the OPEC accords."

OPEC ministers meeting in Vienna last month agreed to limit total production of the 13 member states to 18.5 million barrels per day (b/d) with an aim of raising prices to \$18 a barrel.

In November, daily OPEC output averaged 22.55 million b/d and prices hovered around \$14 per barrel.

Diplomats said that if OPEC members failed to maintain production at those levels, Saudi

Arabia would feel free to increase its revenue by pushing up its own production.

"They are best placed if there is a free-for-all," one said. "It seems there are moves in Aramco (Arabian American Oil Company) to insure they could increase production quickly."

Diplomats said that adjusted for inflation, the kingdom's oil

revenues were now nearly as low as they were in 1973, before an OPEC oil embargo against the West sent prices shooting up by over 10 times.

But since then, the country has built up its foreign reserves, which despite yearly drawdowns are still put at around \$80 billion, not including soft loans to Iraq to help it fight the war against Iran.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Monday Dec. 12, 1988
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	Japanese yen (for 100)	382.3	384.2
U.S. dollar	470.0	472.0	Dutch guilder	236.7	239.9
Pound Sterling	866.1	870.4	Swedish crown	71.8	72.2
Deutschemark	269.6	270.9	Italian lira (for 100)	36.5	36.7
Swiss franc	320.0	321.6	Belgian franc (for 100)	128.7	129.3
French franc	78.9	79.3			

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

	1.8400/10	U.S. dollar
One Sterling	1.2000/10	Canadian dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.7370/80	Deutschemark
	1.9615/25	Dutch guilders
	1.4640/50	Swiss francs
	36.39/44	Belgian francs
	5.9375/425	French francs
	1282/1283	Italian lire
	122.80/90	Japanese yen
	6.0310/60	Swedish crowns
	6.4480/530	Norwegian crowns
	6.7000/50	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	420.80/421.20	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — The share market closed lower after an idle day, as the market awaited overseas and local economic figures due out this week. The All Ordinaries index dropped 2.0 points, to 1,469.2.

TOKYO — Share prices slid in dull trade amid worries over the worsening condition of Emperor Hirohito and ahead of U.S. trade data Wednesday. The Nikkei index closed down 121.23 points, or 0.41 per cent, at 29,672.29.

HONG KONG — The rumour mill was the most active element in a day of dull, quiet trading which saw stocks close mostly lower. The Hang Seng index fell 5.42 to 2,665.94.

SINGAPORE — Share prices closed lower across the board due to lack of fresh incentives and profit-taking. The Straits Times industrial index fell 1.06 to 1,001.20.

BOMBAY — Stockbrokers boycotted trading, demanding more time to complete the business done in the two weeks that ended Nov. 24.

FRANKFURT — Shares eased across the board. Investors were unsettled by increasing speculation about a possible rise in domestic interest rates and by the crop of U.S. economic data due this week. The DAX index fell 8.74 to 1,292.69.

ZURICH — Prices closed little changed but with a positive undertone in fairly quiet trading. The Swiss index rose 3.1 to 931.9.



PARIS — Prices fell back in mostly low-volume morning trading, after early gains failed to attract follow-through buying.

LONDON — Shares were well above their lows of the day in late-afternoon trading, responding to Wall Street's higher opening and further rise. At 1545 GMT the FTSE 100 was down 4.5 at 1,745.8.

NEW YORK — Prices gained further in mid-morning after a strong opening, lifted by strength in the bond market and a firm dollar. The Dow was up 14 at 2,157.

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Bhutto wins confidence vote; Ishaq Khan elected president

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto surmounted her first major parliamentary hurdle Monday, winning a vote of confidence by a substantial margin.

The vote was held as acting head of state Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the man who helped bring Bhutto to power, was formally declared president after winning a huge majority in the presidential electoral college.

Bhutto, who took office Dec. 1 as the first woman prime minister of a Muslim country, won the mandatory confidence motion by 148 votes to 55 in the 237-seat National Assembly.

Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 93 of the 205 National Assembly seats at stake in the lower house in the Nov. 16 elections against 55 for its main rival, the Islamic Democratic

Alliance (IDA).

Her party later won most of the 20 seats reserved for women chosen by directly elected deputies and also secured the backing of small parties and independents.

The constitution required her to test her ability to form a government by submitting to a confidence vote within 60 days of Ishaq Khan naming her prime minister.

But she was so sure of winning the vote early, parliamentary sources said.

Ishaq Khan, 73, won 233 of the 299 votes cast in parliament in

Islamabad against 39 for main rival Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, a veteran politician.

Ishaq Khan took over as acting president on Zia's death in his capacity as chairman of the Senate (upper house). He must vacate that position by the time he takes the presidential oath Tuesday.

His election means that neither the president nor the prime minister is from Pakistan's most populous province of Punjab. Bhutto is from Sindh, the second biggest province, and Ishaq Khan from the North-West Frontier Province.

In the past, when the prime minister was from Sindh, the president has usually been a Punjabi.

Constitutional amendments under Zia have given the president vast powers. He can nomin-

ate the prime minister, dissolve the National Assembly and appoint armed forces chiefs.

On most other matters, the president must act on prime ministerial advice.

Bhutto says she will try to remove these amendments.

Ishaq Khan has been credited across Pakistan's political spectrum with guiding the country back to democracy after 11 years of autocratic rule, eight of them under martial law, by Zia.

Zia died Aug. 17 in a plane crash, whose cause has not been determined.

As senate chairman, the presidency passed to Ishaq Khan, a venerable technocrat and constitutional scholar with nearly 40 years' experience in senior administrative posts, six of them as minister of finance and commerce.



Ghulam Ishaq Khan

35 killed in triple train collision in London

LONDON (Agencies) — Three trains collided during Monday morning rush hour in south London, and conflicting official reports put the death toll as high as 53.

The British Transport Police, a law enforcement unit controlled by state-owned British Rail, said the figure of 53 came from its staff on the scene. The London ambulance service said 30 people died and 114 were hospitalized.

Ambulance spokesman Chris Webb said 30 of the injured were in serious condition, and at least 10 were still trapped in the twisted wreckage four hours after the crash occurred near busy Clapham junction just before 8 a.m. (0800 GMT).

"There could be many more trapped in other cars. We don't know. We can't get to them yet," Webb said.

Transport Police spokesman Jim Rowe said at the scene that some 1,500 people were aboard the trains.

Prime Minister Margaret

Thatcher came out of a meeting in her cabinet room and told reporters she was "grief-stricken."

"It brings home to us very much that families have lost some of their dearest people... it is even more poignant just coming up to Christmas," she said.

Thatcher promised an inquiry.

Rescue workers were using metal cutters to pry open rail cars strewn across the tracks. Emergency surgery was being performed on the scene.

Rowe said a crowded passenger train travelling at 66 to 80 kilometres per hour slammed into the back of a stationary commuter train near Clapham junction.

An empty freight train travelling in the opposite direction then slammed into the wreckage, Rowe said.

"We were going pretty fast, about 70 miles (112 kilometres) an hour," said Gred Ford, 28,

who was on the passenger train. "It went 'bang' and that was it. We were all over the place."

Roy Daniel, 37, was in the buffet car when "the train started stopping and we started falling on top of each other. We came to a stop and the (buffet) counter was sort of lodged on top of us. That saved us."

About 2,200 trains pass through Clapham Junction daily, making it one of the world's busiest.

Police said quick thinking by a driver prevented a fourth train from hitting the wreckage.

"It's horrendous. The first two carriages seem to have come together," a rescue worker said.

One survivor, surveying the first mangled carriages, told reporters: "The whole of the buffet (dining) car disintegrated. The roof split open like a ripe tomato and that's how we got out."

"We tried to find people

underneath the rubble but there was so much debris there was nothing we could do," he said.

British Rail officials said the crash blocked four lines carrying long-distance and commuter traffic into London. All traffic was expected to be halted for more than 24 hours.

"What we are looking at is a very serious disaster," Junior Transport Minister Michael Portillo said as he inspected the remains of the three trains crushed together across the track.

Emmanuel high school near the scene of the crash was transformed into a makeshift clinic. Boys from the school scrambled down the banks to help rescue survivors.

Elderly people at a nearby day centre handed out tea to survivors.

Alec Jackson, a school official, said: "I was in my office here 100 metres from the line. There was just an enormous

explosion, like a bomb, and then smoke, thick, black smog, then absolute mayhem."

He said scores of passengers arrived at the school bleeding, dazed and missing teeth.

Monday's was the third serious rail accident in a month in Britain and the worst since 1975, when 43 died and 74 were injured in a London crash.

On Nov. 30, 15 passengers were injured and 300 escaped when two express trains collided outside the Newcastle-Upon-Tyne rail station in northeast England.

A train driver was killed and 18 passengers badly hurt when a commuter train plowed into a bridge after jumping the tracks near St. Helens in northwest England Nov. 12.

London's worst railway accident was in October 1952, when 112 passengers died and 340 were hurt after three trains crashed at Harrow and Wealdstone station in northwest London.

Disputes flare on eve of Angola accord

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Angola and South Africa have traded fresh charges prior to Tuesday's scheduled signing of a protocol designed to hasten peace in the region.

The latest dispute centres on accusations by the Angolan ambassador to Zambia, Luis Neto Kiambata, that Pretoria is reinforcing UNITA anti-government rebels in Angola.

Kiambata said at the weekend that 150 new ambulances and columns of South African tanks were seen moving north through Namibia towards southeast Angola where the main UNITA forces are based.

A South African military spokesman denied the charge and said the claim of a build-up was ridiculous and a poor attempt at disinformation.

South African state-run radio said Monday that the signing of the protocol would go ahead when Foreign Minister P. W. Botha flies to the Congolese capital of Brazzaville Tuesday.

As a tribute to Congo's contribution in seven months of intricate U.S.-mediated talks between South Africa and Cuba, the document to be signed is called the Brazzaville Protocol, Pretoria officials said.

The protocol will cover an

agreed timetable for the withdrawal of an estimated 50,000 Cuban troops who have helped the Angolan government fight UNITA — the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

South Africa has demanded the Cuban withdrawal as a condition for granting independence to Namibia, the huge desert territory on Africa's Atlantic coast which Pretoria rules in defiance of U.N. resolutions.

The last round of Brazzaville talks ended abruptly when the South Africans left, citing problems over how to verify the Cuban withdrawal over a 27-month period.

The problems appear to have been resolved but uncertainty over when the protocol will be signed are continuing until the last minute.

South African officials were saying last week they were 90 per cent certain the ceremony would be Monday. Other sources have said it will be Wednesday.

The protocol is not the last step in the bid to bring peace to southwestern Africa. More agreements are due, including the date to start granting independence to Namibia under U.N. supervision.

Mexico fireworks blast claims 63

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Chain reaction explosions at illegal fireworks stalls, followed by a fire-raced Sunday through a street market packed with people shopping for a religious holiday, killing more than 60.

Investigators combed through the charred debris of the market early Monday, looking for more bodies and for the cause of the initial explosion.

At least 63 bodies were found, commander Enrique Mejia Guadarrama of the Red Cross said early Monday. At least 11 of the dead were children, officials said.

Red Cross commander Salvador Padilla said 45 people were injured. Most were quickly released from the hospital and none was reported seriously hurt. An official on duty at Red Cross headquarters put the number of injured at 83.

"It was a time bomb," said Elizabeth Diaz, a member of a union of market vendors. "There's hundreds of people who come here to sell them (illegal fireworks), they have for years. Why didn't the authorities come?"

Witnesses disagreed on where

the first explosion occurred. But all said that after the first blast, explosions raced through stalls where vendors were selling illegal fireworks, Roman candles and other fireworks.

"At first it sounded like bullets. Then there were more and more," said Fernando Dominguez, who was working in a shoe store in the market, about one kilometre from the central Zocalo Plaza.

The fire damaged five buildings, including the famous Mercado de Dolores (candy market).

The area was crowded with shoppers buying food, Christmas presents and fireworks to celebrate the Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint, which was Monday.

"People were running out of the market and screaming," said Oscar Cordero, 25, standing by the pile of debris that had been his stand and stock of calculators and other electronic goods.

The block on Corona Street was one of scores in the old downtown where vendors set up tables in the street and is part of one of the busiest market areas in the city of 18 million.

Swiss minister quits over 'dirty money'

BERNE (R) — Elisabeth Kopp, the first woman member of a Swiss government, resigned as justice minister Monday because of a billion-dollar money-laundering scandal with which her husband's name has been linked.

Kopp, 51, the most successful female politician in a country where women first won the right to vote in federal elections in 1971, had tipped off her husband Hans about the impending investigation of a firm of which he was vice-chairman.

Announcing her resignation after a cabinet meeting, she denied wrongdoing but said she accepted the political consequences of her actions.

"I am guilty neither legally nor morally," she told reporters. "The suspicions and insinuations, not only against my family but also against me, have increasingly reached a degree and a dimension that are unbearable."

Her resignation takes effect at the end of February.

Kopp had faced mounting pressure since a prosecutor said in November that a money and precious metals firm, Shakarchi Trading Co., was suspected of dealing with international drug smugglers who channelled \$1 billion through Swiss banks.

Hans Kopp and Shakarchi trading deny the allegations and no charges have been brought against either.

Elisabeth Kopp's admission turned her political allies against her just two days after she had been voted Swiss vice-president by a large parliamentary majority.

Dog with an efficient nose makes a fast buck

POMPANO, Florida (AP) — The boy was up to no good and his parents knew it.

He was staying out late and skipping school. Strangers were coming up to his bedroom window late at night. But he swore he was not dealing in drugs. The parents needed proof to set him straight and they did not want him to get arrested.

They called in Corky, an eager yellow Labrador with a remarkably effective nose.

The dog found a quarter-ounce (seven grammes) of coke in gram bags in a slit under his rug," said Gene Panella, who trained two-year-old Corky to locate even minute amounts of marijuana, cocaine and heroin at \$250 a sniff.

Panella, owner of K9 of Broward, has found a lucrative new angle on South Florida's ever-present drug trade — working for private citizens who want their property to be drug-free — but has also raised the ire of civil libertarians.

"It's funny to think of a dog as high-tech... but it's clear that this

is a very highly invasive type of technology," said Paul Joseph, vice-president of the Florida branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, a private group dedicated to enforcing constitutional liberties.

Panella primarily breeds and trains guard dogs, but he decided to branch out after boat owners began calling him for help from the U.S. coast guard's "zero tolerance" policy of confiscating boats found with minimal amounts of drugs on board.

"Families and corporations are mostly interested in getting help for people on drugs, rather than arresting them. All I'm doing is finding the evidence to confront them with," said Panella, who claims Corky has found drugs in 32 of 33 homes.

Panella says he warns business executives that one offender can leave drug residue all over an office. But he does not worry that the dog might also implicate drug-free employees during his searches.

"I just tell them were it is. The rest is their problem."

COLUMN

Flesh trade ring bust in Seoul

SEOUL (AP) — Eleven people have been arrested for abducting and selling 120 teenage girls to brothels and bars in red light districts, officials say. The Seoul prosecutor's office said six other suspects were still being sought after arrests broke up a series of vice rings that had forced teenage girls into prostitution. Officials said girls were obtained either through false job ads that promised high salaries or were abducted on their way to work. They said the teenagers were then sold to brothels and bars where they were forced to work. One suspect allegedly hired seven men who kidnapped more than 20 teenage girls, officials said.

Mechanics plunge 35 floors and live

SYDNEY (AP) — Two mechanics plummeted 35 floors in an elevator from the top floor of the stock exchange building Monday, but both men escaped serious injury, officials said. The men were doing routine maintenance work on the elevator when it suddenly gave way and plunged to the basement. Fire department spokesman John Ross said the men were conscious when they were found. They were taken to a Sydney hospital where a spokesman said they suffered only minor injuries.

Plan to exhume 3,600 bodies sparks row

CAPE TOWN (AP) — A parliament member says his constituents are outraged by a government plan to exhume and rebury the remains of more than 3,600 South Africans to make way for a new traffic interchange. "It's wrong, immoral and unchristian," said Patrick McKenzie, who represents the Cape Town suburb of Bontheuvel in the mixed-race chamber of parliament. Major newspapers Sunday carried a list of all the dead people whose graves in Maitland cemetery will be affected by the construction project. "Existing memorials will be suitably reerected, and a garden of remembrance established for the reburial of the remains of those who at present do not have any memorials," said a notice accompanying the list. McKenzie was quoted by the nationally circulated Sunday Times as saying those buried in the cemetery were mostly mixed-race people but also included white immigrants from Germany and elsewhere.

Canaletto painting fetches record

VENICE (AP) — A painting by Canaletto was sold Sunday for 1.4 billion lire (\$1.01 million), a record amount for a Venetian artist's work, the Italian news service ANSA reported. The work, called "The Bull Hunt in St. Mark's Piazza," was sold at an auction in Venice's Giovannelli palace. Canaletto, whose real name was Giovanni Antonio Canal, lived from 1697 to 1768 and won fame for his precisely painted views of Venice, London and the English countryside.

Minister drops hobby to escape curses

SAO PAULO (R) — Finance Minister Mailson Nobrega says Brazil's economic crisis is hitting even the innocent pleasures of a cabinet minister. Nobrega used to delight in cycling regularly in Brasilia. But now, as the inflation rate has steadily risen to about 900 per cent a year, Nobrega has been forced to seek new diversions. "Cycling has been my favourite sport for the past 15 years. But in the last three months with the speeding up of inflation... I became a figure whom everyone wants to curse publicly," he said in an interview published Sunday in the Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper.

Boys break cheerleading barrier

BURLINGTON, Connecticut (AP) — Two boys have won spots on their school's cheerleading squad, resolving a sex discrimination dispute that arose after school officials said tryouts were for girls only. Three boys had tried out for the Har-Bur Middle School team that will cheer at basketball games, but administrators told them the school had not planned for a coeducational squad. Brett Jeans and his friend Sean Cole then called television stations and newspapers, which contacted school officials. Administrators relented after consulting school superintendent James Schmidt. Six boys then tried out and two were chosen, said Schmidt.

Police outsmart TWA hijacker

MIAMI (AP) — A TWA flight from Puerto Rico to Miami with 128 people on board was diverted to Grand Turk island Sunday after a Cuban exile told the crew he had a bomb and wanted to go to Havana, officials said.

The man was arrested soon after the plane landed when police on Grand Turk fooled him into thinking he was in Cuba, according to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) spokesman Paul Miller. No one was injured, and the man was found to have no bomb, he said.

Jack Barker, a spokesman for the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, said the incident occurred on TWA Flight 469, a Boeing 727 flying from San Juan to Miami with 121 passengers and a crew of seven.

Barker said the flight was diverted to Grand Turk, a British colony in the Turks and Caicos islands southeast of the Bahamas. It landed at 12:11 p.m. (1711 GMT), and by 1:25 p.m. (1825 GMT) local authorities had the

hijacker in custody, Barker said. TWA officials in New York said in a statement that everyone on board the plane was fine. The flight finally arrived in Miami Sunday evening.

The alleged hijacker was identified as Felix Sanchez Rodriguez, a 26-year-old Cuban exile who left Cuba as part of the 1980 Mariel boatlift, said TWA official, Robert Blattner, at the airline's headquarters in St. Louis.

"He was distraught because his mother, who lives in Cuba, was in poor health," Blattner said.

After the man claimed he had a bomb, the pilot obtained permission to land on Grand Turk island, where police used a Spanish-speaking person to convince the man that he was in Havana, said Miller of the FBI.

The suspect was being held in Grand Turk pending extradition proceedings Monday for possible air piracy charges, said Larry Torrence of the FBI's Miami office.

Passengers arriving in Miami

said the man never threatened them and seemed anxious not to alarm anyone.

It was the first hijacking of a domestic U.S. flight since May 3, 1986, when a man hijacked a Horizon Air commuter jet with 11 other passengers and two crewmembers. The hijacker was arrested without reaching his destination in the United States.

Hijackings to Cuba were common in the late 1960s and early 70s, prompting the security measures now commonplace at airports. The only previous hijacking involving a U.S. commercial flight this year occurred in October, when three soldiers in Haiti stormed aboard an American Airlines jetliner bound for New York during a period of political turmoil in that country.

On May 25, a flight mechanic without a pilot's licence stole a private jet in Virginia and took it on a 2,500-kilometre ride to Denver, where he shot himself as authorities closed in.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

North Korean premier resigns

TOKYO (R) — North Korean Premier Li Gun-Mo has resigned due to health reasons, the official North Korean News Agency reported Monday. The agency, monitored here, quoted a communique from the central committee of the ruling Workers' Party saying politburo member Yon Hyong-Muk had been appointed to succeed him. Li, who became premier in December 1986, had requested to be relieved of his post "since he found it difficult to carry on economic organisation and external activities for health reasons," the agency said.

Hawke seeks end to row with Belgrade

MELBOURNE (AP) — Prime Minister Bob Hawke Monday criticised Yugoslavia for its retaliatory expulsion of three Australian diplomats but said he hoped the action would end a dispute between the two countries. The diplomats from the Australian consulate in Belgrade were heading home Monday after being thrown out because Australia closed the Yugoslav consulate in Sydney after a shooting incident there. Hawke said Australia would not retaliate against what he called Yugoslavia's "unjustified" expulsions. "I would like to see an end to the matter," he said, speaking at the opening of a new child care centre. "What we want to see is a decent relationship because in the end decent, diplomatic relationships are about looking after people."

Warrant out for espionage suspects

BERLIN (AP) — West Berlin justice officials said Sunday that an arrest warrant had been issued for a 47-year-old businessman suspected of being involved in a spy ring that delivered military secrets to the Soviets. Detlev Achammer, a spokesman for the West Berlin Justice Department, confirmed that "three people are being investigated on suspicion of espionage." He declined to elaborate on details of the case and refused to identify the suspects. An arrest warrant for a second suspect was issued Thursday, Achammer said. A spokesman for the federal prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe said Friday that a man was detained and questioned in Munich connection with the investigation. Spokesman Hans-Juergen Foerster said the man was released because of lack of evidence.

3 policemen wounded in Soweto ambush

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Three black policemen riding in a van in Soweto were ambushed and wounded by automatic rifle fire, police said Monday. One of the victims, a sergeant, was wounded in the head and chest and was listed in serious condition at Baragwanath hospital in the black township near Johannesburg, police said. A Soweto police spokesman said detectives were investigating whether the attack Saturday night was carried out by criminals or anti-government guerrillas fighting the apartheid system of racial segregation. Many previous attacks on black policemen have been blamed on the African National Congress movement. But police said criminal gangs in black townships also had access to weapons such as the AK-47 rifle used in Saturday's ambush.

Ariane satellites working smoothly

KOUROU, French Guiana (R) — Two West European telecommunications satellites launched by the Ariane-4 rocket were working smoothly Monday, launch officials said. The rocket took off from the European Space Agency's jungle launch pad Saturday after a 24-hour technical delay. Jean-Michel Desobean, flight payload manager, said the privately owned Astra television satellite and Britain's SkyNet 4B military probe were in a transfer orbit and were expected to take up fixed positions in space later this week. The satellites, worth a total of about \$100 million, will begin operation in about a month's time after a series of complex manoeuvres. The SkyNet satellite is the first of three aimed at improving communication links between British military bases and its ships, submarines, planes and other mobile forces. The Astra satellite, the first from Western Europe to be privately funded, will be able to beam television channels to small reception dishes in European homes. Ten of its 16 channels have already been launched by television programmers.

Colonial days waning but Hong Kong keeps caning

By Dan Biers
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — In the waning days of British colonial rule, Hong Kong's government is mulling whether to abolish the criminal punishment of flogging that critics claim is a cruel remnant from a bygone era.

"We believe it is cruel and inhumane and degrading," said Andrew Stables, chairman of the local Amnesty International branch that has asked the government to end flogging, also known as caning.

Flogging was a common form of criminal punishment during the heyday of the British empire but since has been largely rejected by the West. It was abolished in Britain 40 years ago.

Hong Kong authorities, however, continue to use the rod, although more sparingly than in the past.

In 1952, there were 476 offenders, mostly juveniles, sentenced to flogging in the colony. The number fell to 20 by 1979 and only one criminal was whipped last year.

During the first 10 months of 1988, seven people were flogged: four teen-agers for robbery, two teen-agers for indecent assault and a 27-year-old man for possessing an offensive weapon in public. Other crimes that can carry a sentence of caning include rape of a woman younger than 16 and piracy.

Under the corporal punishment statute, only men can be flogged and "the instrument used shall be a light cane or rattan of a type approved by the governor." The maximum number of strokes that can be applied are 18 for offenders aged 17 or older to six for offenders under 14 years.

The sentence is carried out by a correctional services department staff member in the presence of a doctor, who examines the offender to make sure he can take the punishment. The prisoner leans forward across a padded bar with his arms secured and his loins covered by a canvas cloth as

his bare buttocks are lashed. Caning typically is administered in a prison room out of sight of other inmates. The public is not allowed to attend.

One magistrate who spoke on condition of anonymity recalled viewing black-and-white photographs of an offender who had received six strokes.

"The wounds that I saw were quite considerable. The skin was open and apparently to some depth," the magistrate said. "I can remember being fairly horrified by (the pictures)."

Critics of caning argue the punishment is not only barbaric but ineffective. Nihal Jayawickrama, a senior law lecturer at the University of Hong Kong, says researchers have found "that people on whom (flogging) is imposed continue to have a very deep-rooted grievance against the community for the humiliation they have had to undergo."

One section of the law that has come under particularly harsh criticism sets the minimum sentence for a conviction of possession of an offensive weapon in a public place as caning or at least six months in detention.

Magistrates often give a sentence of flogging to prevent offenders from languishing in custody. Eighty per cent of canings since 1979 have been for weapons possession convictions.

Although an official committee set up in 1965 to examine corporal punishment recommended that caning be abolished, the practice is approved by many of Hong Kong's 5.7 million people.

The committee report said most people who expressed an opinion to the government on corporal punishment supported its retention, largely as a deterrent to increasing violence attributed to "ah feis," or local bully boys.

A public opinion poll appearing in the South China Morning Post newspaper in 1986 found 56 per cent of the people surveyed believed corporal punishment should be retained.